1
Tokyo
TARAREBA
GIRLS
AKIKO
HIGASHIMURA

Tokyo
TARAREBA
GIRLS
1
AKIKO
HIGASHIMURA

TODAY'S RECOMMENDATIONS

ACT 1 THE WHAT-IF GIRLS 003

ACT 2 THE WHAT-IF GIRLS AND THE BLONDE MAN 045

ACT 3 HONEY TOAST WOMAN 085

ACT 4 THE WOMAN WITH SAVINGS AND THE YOUNGER MAN 127

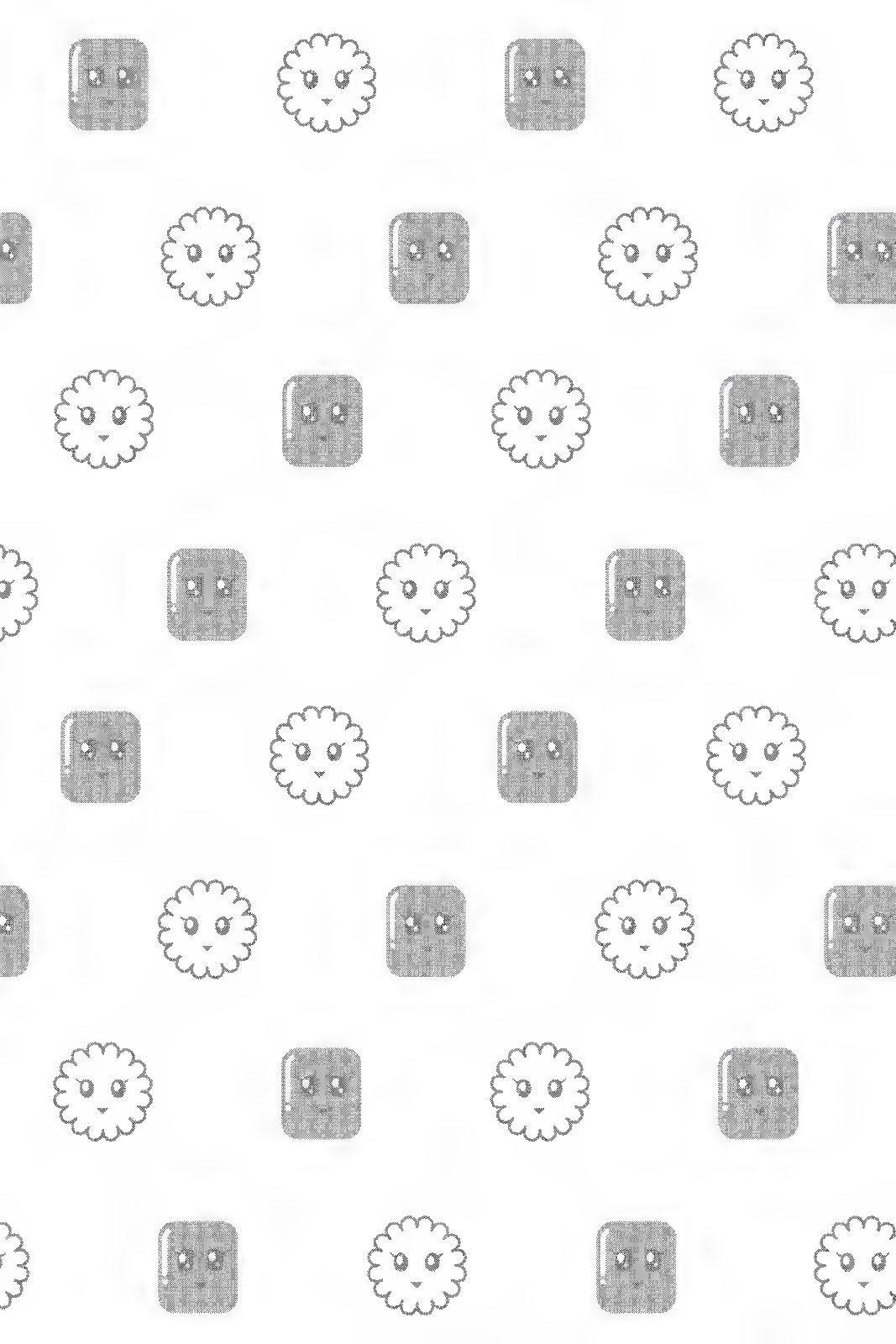
ACT Ex BONUS STORY 167

I SPENT ALL MY TIME WONDERING "WHAT IF," THEN ONE DAY I WOKE UP AND I WAS 33.

ACT
1
THE WHAT-IF GIRLS
Choose Me!

Choose
Me!

ACT
1
THE WHAT-IF GIRLS



CONGRATULATIONS TO TOKYO!! THE NEXT HOST OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES!!
TOKYO 2020
YEEEAAAH!
BOY...
THEY REALLY WENT AND DID IT...

TOKYO'S GOING TO HOST THE OLYMPICS.

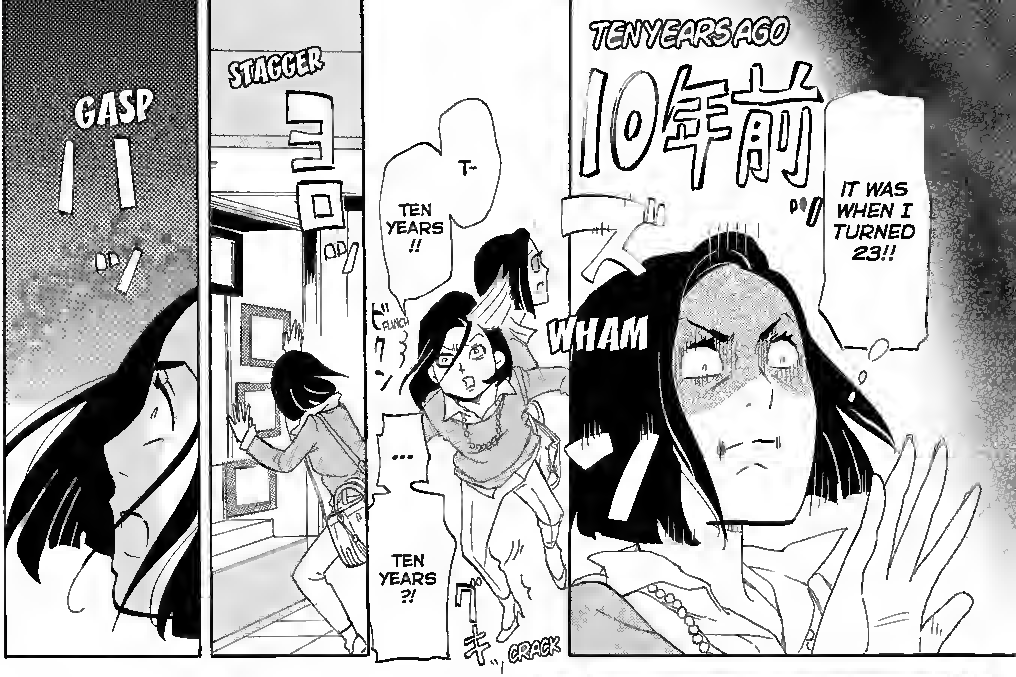
RINKO ...?
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY!

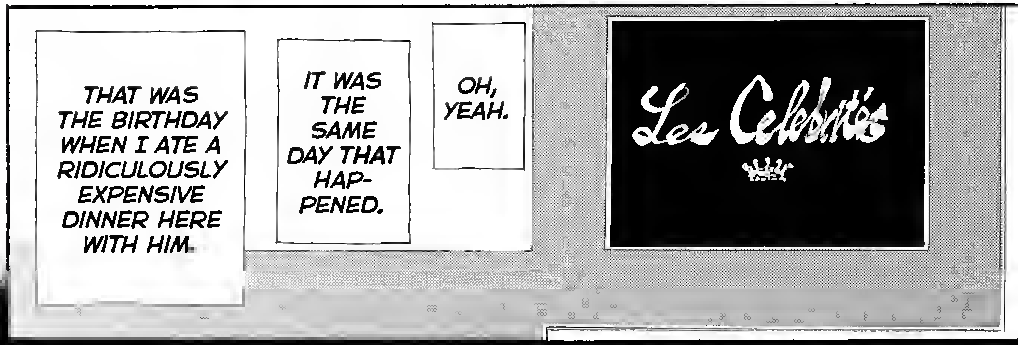
SILENCE

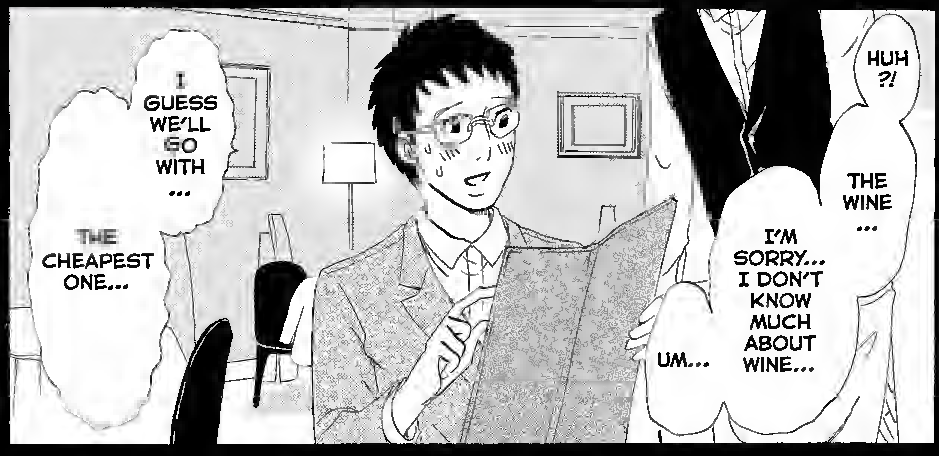
COST OF THE EXTRA-RHINESTONE SPARKLING NAIL MANICURE FOR BOTH HANDS, PURCHASED TO CELEBRATE MY COMING 33RD BIRTHDAY: 30,000.*
*about $300

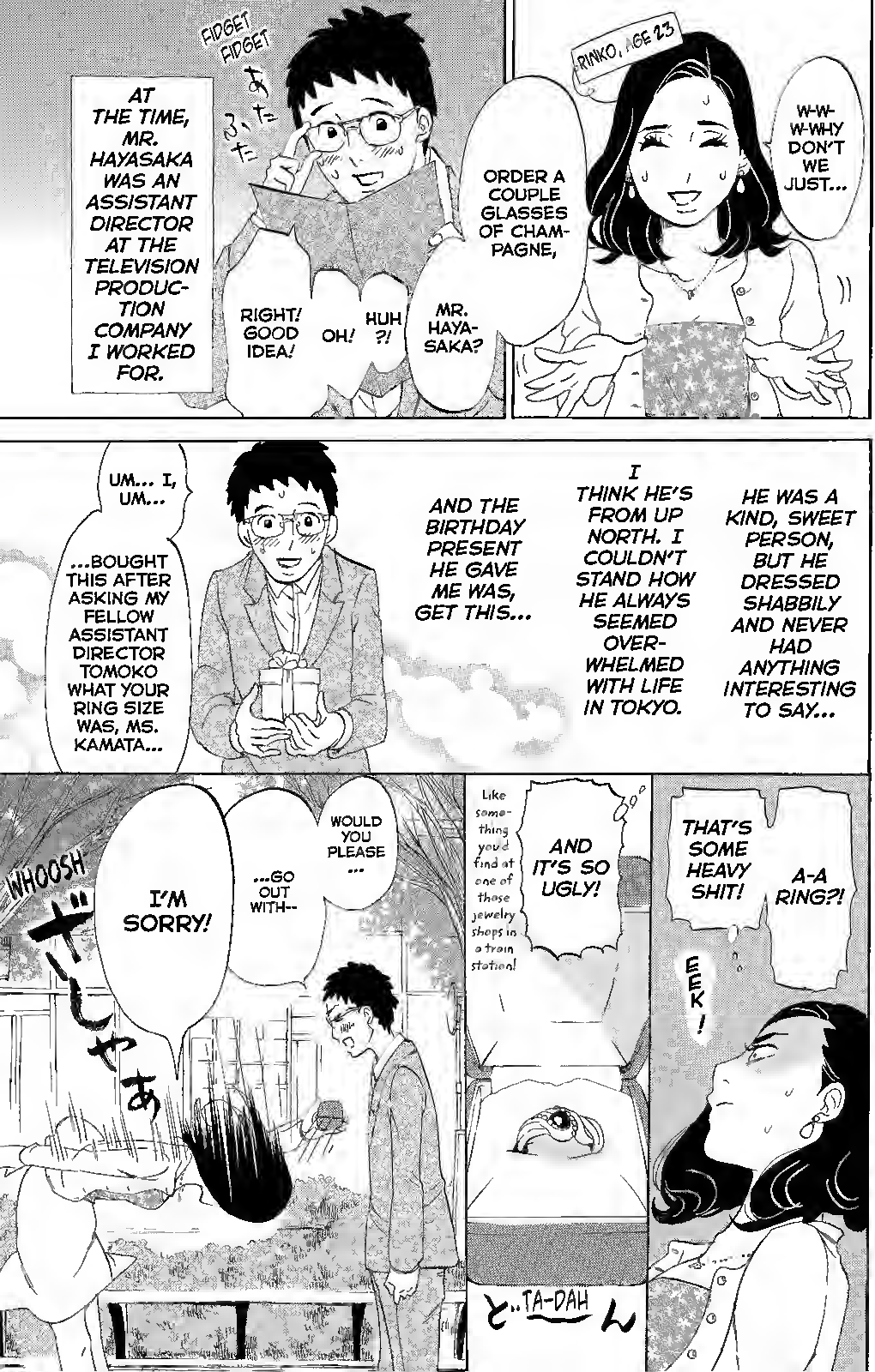
WE'LL DEFINITELY BE MARRIED BY THEN!
Time Left Until the Tokyo Olympics:
2313 days
FOR SURE!
Tokyo 2020

Omotesando Station
WOW ...
KAORI REALLY LAID THEM ON THICK...
KAORI HAS BEEN ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS SINCE HIGH SCHOOL ...
SHE RUNS A NAIL SALON NEAR OMOTE-SANDO.
SHE'S GORGEOUS, WITH A GREAT BODY, BUT FOR SOME REASON SHE'S STILL SINGLE.
AND FOR SOME OTHER REASON, IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS SINCE SHE EVEN HAD A BOYFRIEND.
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THE FIRST TIME KAORI DID MY NAILS WAS ALSO ON MY BIRTHDAY.
HMM?
WHEN WAS THAT?
I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS RIGHT AFTER WE GRAD-UATED COLLEGE ...
HUH ?!

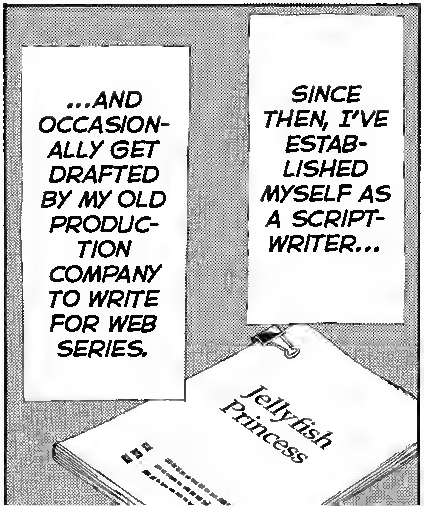

GASP
STAGGER
TEN YEARS AGO
10年前
IT WAS WHEN I TURNED 23!!
T-
TEN YEARS !!
WHAM
...
TEN YEARS ?!
CRACK


THAT WAS THE BIRTHDAY WHEN I ATE A RIDICULOUSLY EXPENSIVE DINNER HERE WITH HIM.
IT WAS THE SAME DAY THAT HAP-PENED.
OH, YEAH.
Les Celebrités


I GUESS WE'LL GO WITH ... THE CHEAPEST ONE...
UM...
I'M SORRY... I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT WINE...
HUH ?!
THE WINE ...


AT THE TIME, MR. HAYASAKA WAS AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR AT THE TELEVISION PRODUCTION COMPANY I WORKED FOR.
FIDGET FIDGET
あたふた
RIGHT! GOOD IDEA!
OH!
HUH?!
MR. HAYASAKA?
ORDER A COUPLE GLASSES OF CHAMPAGNE,
RINKO, AGE 23
W-W-W-WHY DON'T WE JUST...
UM... I, UM...
...BOUGHT THIS AFTER ASKING MY FELLOW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR TOMOKO WHAT YOUR RING SIZE WAS, MS. KAMATA...
AND THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT HE GAVE ME WAS, GET THIS...
I THINK HE'S FROM UP NORTH. I COULDN'T STAND HOW HE ALWAYS SEEMED OVERWHELMED WITH LIFE IN TOKYO.
HE WAS A KIND, SWEET PERSON, BUT HE DRESSED SHABBILY AND NEVER HAD ANYTHING INTERESTING TO SAY...
WHOOSH
I'M SORRY!
...GO OUT WITH--
WOULD YOU PLEASE ...
だしゃあ
Like something you'd find at one of those jewelry shops in a train station!
AND IT'S SO UGLY!
ど..TA-DAH ん
THAT'S SOME HEAVY SHIT!
A-A RING?!
EEK!

GOOD MORNING.
I'VE GOT THE DETAILS ON OUR CASTING OPTIONS FOR THE WEB SERIES.
...I STILL SEE RING-MAN ALL THE TIME AT WORK. TIME APPARENTLY HAS A SENSE OF IRONY...
BUT...
OLYMPIA
オリンピア


...AND OCCASIONALLY GET DRAFTED BY MY OLD PRODUCTION COMPANY TO WRITE FOR WEB SERIES.
SINCE THEN, I'VE ESTABLISHED MYSELF AS A SCRIPTWRITER...
Jellyfish Princess

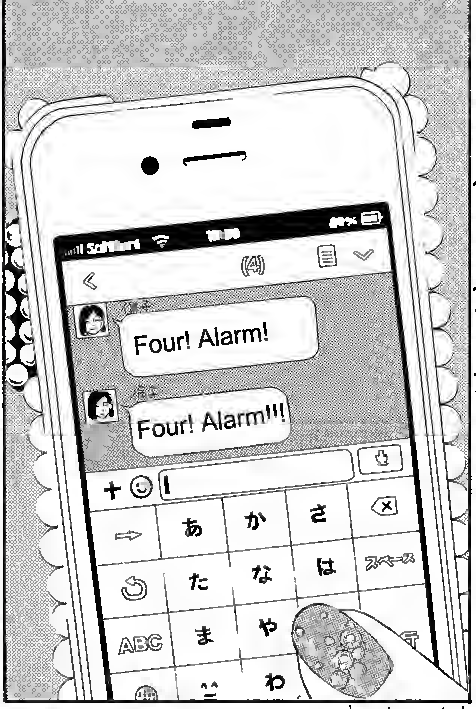
I JUST REMEMBERED YOU SAYING THE OTHER DAY THAT YOU CAN'T WRITE THE SCRIPT UNTIL WE SETTLE ON THE CAST...
...SO I WANTED TO GET IT TO YOU AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE...
OH!
I-I'M SORRY!
...YOU'RE IN AWFULLY EARLY TODAY...
MR. HAYASAKA...

MR. HAYASAKA, WHO WAS AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BACK THEN...
...IS NOW A FULL-FLEDGED DIRECTOR. AND HIS LOOKS...
...HAVE IMPROVED A LOT, TOO.
IN FACT ...
...HE'S NOT HALF BAD?
BUT...
...I WONDER WHY HE'S STILL SINGLE.
COULD IT BE... COULD IT BE...
...HE STILL HAS A THING FOR ME?
KER-CHUNK
GOOOOOD MORNING!
WHAT?! YOU ALREADY STARTED THE MEETING!
WHAT'S UP, MR. HAYASAK? IT'S NOT EVEN TEN YET!
OH... YEAH. BUT I HAD TO GET THESE MATERIALS IN RIGHT AWAY...
MAMI ...
YOU AND I MAY BE THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THIS OFFICE, BUT I STILL DON'T THINK THAT OUTFIT IS APPROPRIATE ...
TA-DAH!
LOOK AT THIS RING!!
ISN'T IT SOOO CUTE?

THAT'S OKAY! I'LL—
HEY!!
SHOVE
SHOVE
THERE!
THESE ARE SOOO TRENDY RIGHT NOW! YOU TRY IT ON, TOO, RINKO!
WHAT?!
T-THAT'S DIS-GUSTING...
IT'S THE SAME RING KYARY PAMYU PAMYU HAS!! I BOUGHT IT YES-TERDAY ON TAKE-SHITA STREET!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MR. HAYASAKA?
HUH?!
I DON'T WANT IT TO SUIT ME!
IT DOESN'T SUIT YOU AT ALL...
HUH?!
And your nails are awfully sparkly...
LOOK!
IT'S A PERFECT FIT!
THUNK
I-I'M SORRY! I-I'VE GOT A MEETING TO GET TO!
HAH!
RINKO'S SO PRETTY, ANYTHING LOOKS GOOD ON HER.
UM...

MR. HAYASAKA'S DEFINITELY INTO YOU, DON'T YOU THINK?
TWITCH
HUH ?!
IT IS SOOO OBVIOUS. HE COMES HERE ALL THE TIME EVEN THOUGH IT'S NEVER FOR ANYTHING IMPORTANT!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO OUT WITH HIM ALREADY?
W- WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MAMI?
HE'S JUST AN OLD CO-WORKER ...
I THINK HE'S A PRETTY GOOD GUY, THOUGH.
HE WORKS HARD AND DOES HIS JOB WELL...
AND I DOUBT HE'D EVER CHEAT ON YOU!
CLINK
CLINK
I'M NOT GOING TO TELL HER HE ALREADY TRIED HIS LUCK TEN YEARS AGO...
Girls like her always go overboard trying to hook you up, so I'm scared of what she might pull
THAT DECADE WENT BY IN A FLASH.
I GRADUATED COLLEGE AND GOT A JOB AT A TV STUDIO IN HOPES OF BECOMING A WRITER...
AFTER WORKING LIKE CRAZY, I FINALLY WROTE THE SCRIPT FOR A TEN-MINUTE WEB SERIES UNDER MY OWN NAME AT 27.
THEN, WHEN I WAS 30, I BECAME AN ESTABLISHED WRITER AND RENTED THIS LITTLE OFFICE IN OMOTE-SANDO...

FIFTY YEARS OLD...
THE NAME OF THE BUILOING IS EVEN "VILLA OLYMPIA"...
THE YEAR OF THE TOKYO OLYMPICS. THAT'S WHEN THESE ULTRA-VINTAGE APART-MENTS WERE BUILT...
1964 ...
Inbox (29)
5/50
From Mr. Hayasaka
/ Hide
To Rinko Kamata
This is Hayasaka.
03-03-14 07:58 PM
Thank you for meeting with me earlier
I hate to be a bother, but I would like to discuss something with you. Could I trouble you for some time later this week?
BEEP
HMM?
FIFTY YEARS LATER...
I'LL BET THESE CRUMMY APARTMENTS NEVER THOUGHT IN A MILLION YEARS THEY'D SEE ANOTHER OLYMPIC GAMES...
villa Olym
VZZZZ
VZZZZ



*see translator's notes

SO?
SHE'S THE ONLY DAUGHTER OF THE FAMILY THAT OWNS THE PUB WE CONSIDER THE BEST IN JAPAN.
THIS IS ANOTHER GOOO FRIENO OF MINE SINCE HIGH SCHOOL, KOYUKI.
THIS IS IMPORT-ANT!
GET IT YOUR-SELF !!
I'M GONNA NEED ANOTHER DRINK!
KOYUKI!
THE LAST ONE WAS BACK WHEN YOUR OLD BOYFRIEND CHEATED ON YOU, WHICH I THINK MAKES IT TWO YEARS AGO.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG, I DOUBLED THE NAKA IN MY HOPPY!
HOW LONG'S IT BEEN SINCE WE HAD A FOUR ALARM-ER?
HUFF
HUFF

AND THIS TIME...

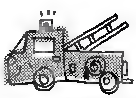
THE ALARM RAISED ONLY WHEN WE NEED URGENT ADVICE ABOUT A MAN IS A FOUR ALARM.

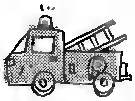
WHEN WE WANT TO REALLY BADMOUTH SOMEONE, THAT'S A THREE ALARM.

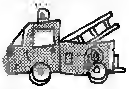
WHEN WE WANT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED AT WORK, THAT'S A TWO ALARM.

WHEN WE WANT TO DRINK BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING BETTER TO DO, THAT'S A ONE ALARM.

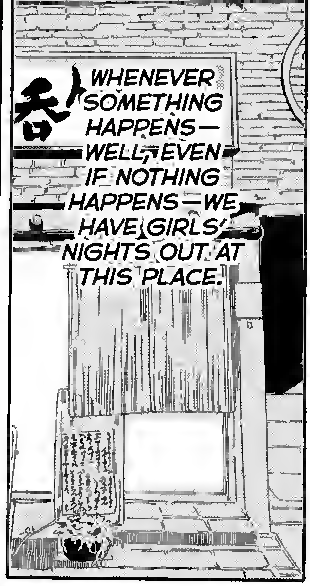
IT COMES FROM FIREMAN LINGO!!







WHENEVER SOMETHING HAPPENS—WELL, EVEN IF NOTHING HAPPENS—WE HAVE GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT AT THIS PLACE.



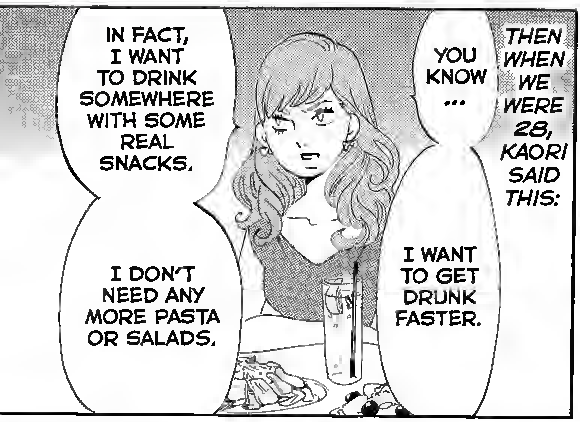
THEN WHEN WE WERE 28, KAORI SAID THIS:

YOU KNOW...

I WANT TO GET DRUNK FASTER.

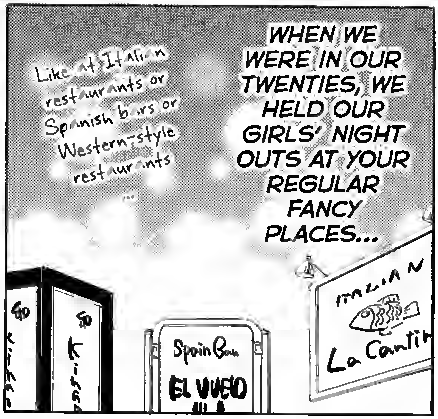
IN FACT, I WANT TO DRINK SOMEWHERE WITH SOME REAL SNACKS.

I DON'T NEED ANY MORE PASTA OR SALADS.



WHEN WE WERE IN OUR TWENTIES, WE HELD OUR GIRLS' NIGHT OUTS AT YOUR REGULAR FANCY PLACES...

Like Italian restaurants or Spanish bars or Western-style restaurants...



AND...

IT STUCK.

DID YOU ORDER THE MILT WITH PONZU SAUCE?

YOU KNOW IT!

GLUG

GLUG

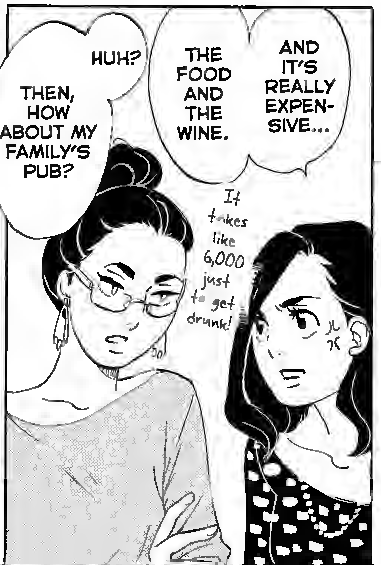
HUH?

THEN, HOW ABOUT MY FAMILY'S PUB?

THE FOOD AND THE WINE.

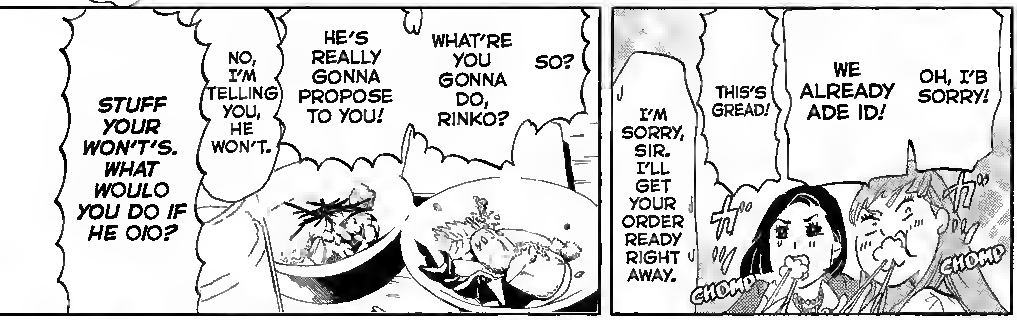
AND IT'S REALLY EXPENSIVE...

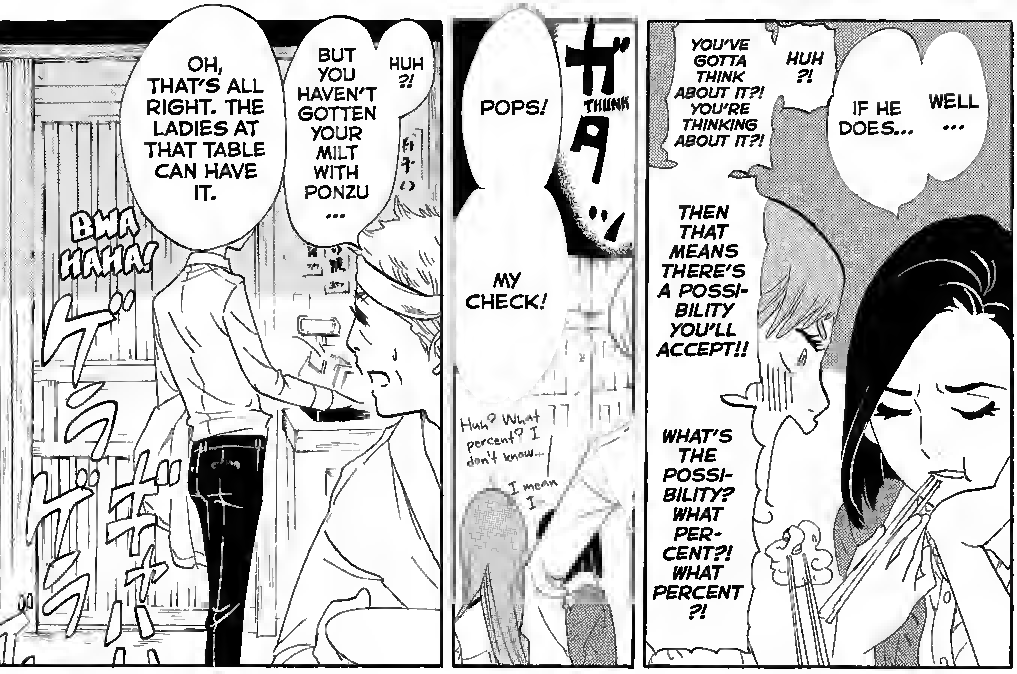
It takes like 6,000 just to get drunk!



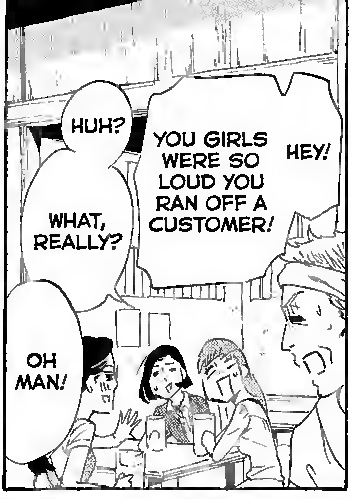
WHOOSH
Really, get back to work
RARGH!
TODAY, I GOT CHATTED UP ONCE AGAIN BY THAT GUY WHO, WAY BACK WHEN, GAVE ME AN UGLY RING OUT OF NOWHERE ON MY BIRTHDAY...
SO?!
IT'S OKAY! THIS IS A FOUR ALARMER!
WE HAVE THE INGREDIENTS, BUT GO EASY TODAY, YOU THREE...
DAD, CAN YOU DO LIVER STEAKS TODAY?!
THEN WE'LL ORDER SOME LIVER CUTLETS AND LIVER SKEWERS ...
AND I WANT SOME LIVER TOO! LIVER!
カキフライ 580
いわし天ぷら 450
ポテトフライ 400
ガーリックポテト 450
さつま揚 400
ちくわカレー揚 400
げそ唐揚 400
もつこなす 450
COULD YOU LADIES KEEP IT DOWN A LITTLE?
HUH?!
OH!
WHY, CERTAINLY! PARDON US.
SO?!
WHAT?!
EXCUSE ME...
WAIT! YOU MEAN... THAT SHABBY A.D.?!
THE GUY'S A DIRECTOR NOW.
FOR REAL?!
WAIT, HOW LONG AGO WAS THAT AGAIN?!
TEN YEARS ...
SO HE'S GONNA ASK YOU OUT ON YOUR BIRTHDAY FOR THE SECOND TIME, A DECADE LATER TO THE DAY...
THIS GUY'S GOT GUTS.
MUNCH
YOU KNOW ...
WHAT IF HE DOESN'T ASK YOU OUT THIS TIME...
WHAT IF HE BREAKS OUT THE OL' PROPOSAL?
Why'd you put it like that?

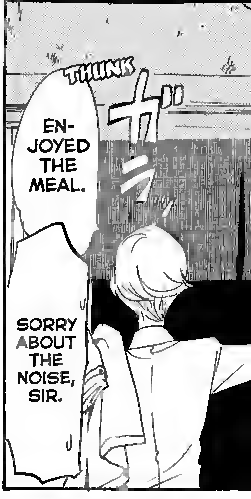
I DOUBT HE'D GO THAT FAR...
NO, NO! THINK ABOUT YOUR AGE! HE'LL POP THAT QUESTION! HOW OLD'S THIS GUY?
HE'S 35, I THINK ...
IF HE GAVE YOU A REGULAR RING LAST TIME, THIS TIME IT'LL BE AN ENGAGEMENT RING! IN OTHER WORDS ...
A PROP-OOOSAL !!
HERE'S YOUR MILT WITH PONZU SAUCE.
EXCUSE ME!
I THINK THAT'S MINE!
OH!
I'M SORRY! YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN YOUR ORDER YET?
Hooray for Milt!


STUFF YOUR WON'T'S. WHAT WOULO YOU DO IF HE OIO?
NO, I'M TELLING YOU, HE WON'T.
HE'S REALLY GONNA PROPOSE TO YOU!
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO, RINKO?
SO?
I'M SORRY, SIR. I'LL GET YOUR ORDER READY RIGHT AWAY.
THIS'S GREAD!
WE ALREADY ADE ID!
OH, I'B SORRY!
CHOMP
CHOMP


OH, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. THE LADIES AT THAT TABLE CAN HAVE IT.
BWA HAHA!
BUT YOU HAVEN'T GOTTEN YOUR MILT WITH PONZU ...
HUH ?!
POPS!
THINK
MY CHECK!
Huh? What percent? I don't know... I mean I
YOU'VE GOTTA THINK ABOUT IT?! YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT IT?!
HUH ?!
IF HE DOES...
WELL ...
THEN THAT MEANS THERE'S A POSSI-BILITY YOU'LL ACCEPT!!
WHAT'S THE POSSI-BILITY? WHAT PER-CENT?! WHAT PERCENT ?!

IN TOKYO, NO ONE CARES IF YOUNG WOMEN DRINK IN SOME CHEAP PUB.
BWAHAHA-HAHA
WHAM

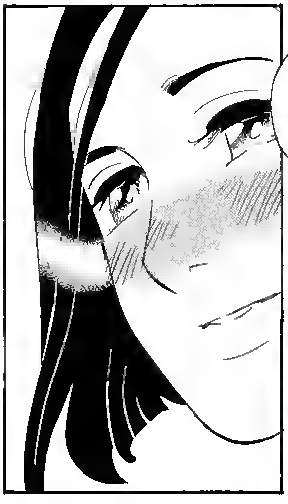

HUH?
YOU GIRLS WERE SO LOUD YOU RAN OFF A CUSTOMER!
HEY!
WHAT, REALLY?
OH MAN!

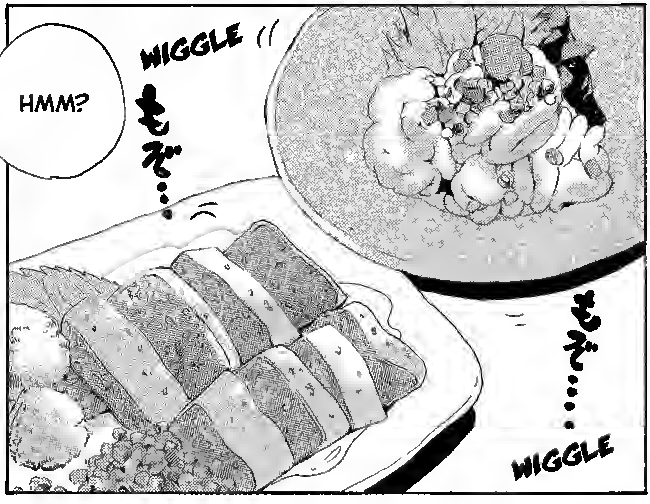

THANK
EN-JOYED THE MEAL.
SORRY ABOUT THE NOISE, SIR.

THE GREAT BEER...
THE DELICIDUS FOOD...

I LOVE DRINKING WITH THE GIRLS.

AND I LOVE TOKYO.


HMM?


WIGGLE
もぞ…
もぞ…
WIGGLE

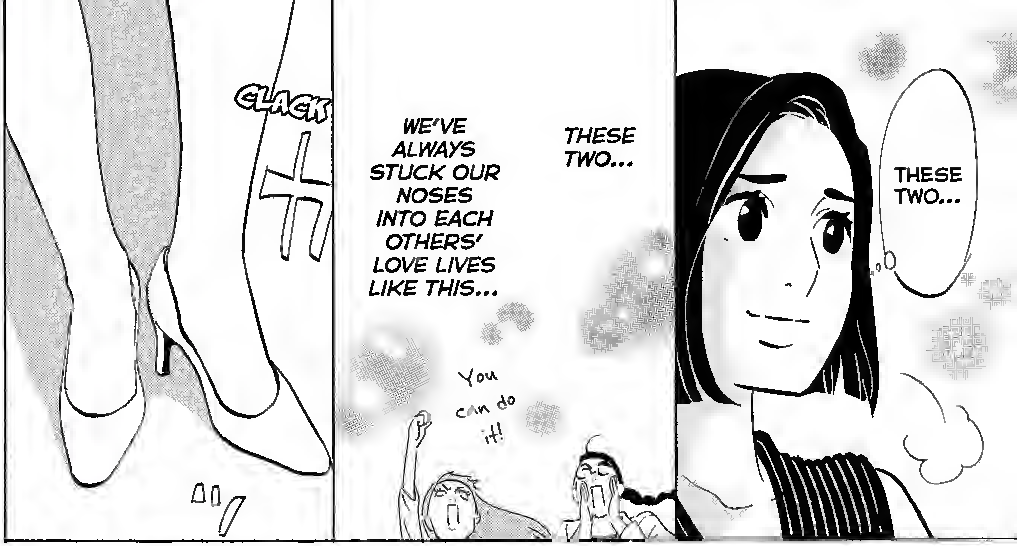
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...WE LOOK AHEAD SIX YEARS TO WHAT THESE THREE WILL BE DOING DURING THE NEXT OLYMPICS?
THEY'LL BE DRINKING HERE LIKE ALWAYS! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
THE CODFISH MILT AND LIVER ARE TALKING!
AHA-HA!
HOP
YOU GOT SO DRUNK LAST WEEK YOU COULDN'T EVEN WORK THE NEXT DAY... WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
RINKO!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU DIDN'T DRINK TOO MUCH TONIGHT?
RISE
HUH?
THERE'S NO TIME TO BE TALKING LIKE THAT... WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
COME ON!
BUT I DON'T REALLY... LIKE MR. HAYASAKA THAT WAY...
RINKO...YOU CAN'T LET THAT NO-LONGER-JUST-ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GET AWAY...WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
WE REALLY NEED TO GET OUR ACTS TOGETHER AND FIND SOME HUSBANDS...
I KNOW!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'RE RIGHT? WHAT IF, WHAT IF... HE'S A NICE GUY EVEN IF HE'S A LOSER?
IF YOU LET HIM GET AWAY, YOU'LL BE...
YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER, SO THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST CHANCE... WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
THAT'S RIGHT!
What if, what if... Atsuko Asano said so the 101st time a man proposed to her?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WOMEN HAVE TO CHOOSE "BEING LOVED" OVER "BEING IN LOVE" ONCE THEY'RE OVER THIRTY?
RINKO!

DOOOOOM
Forever !!
Alone
GASP

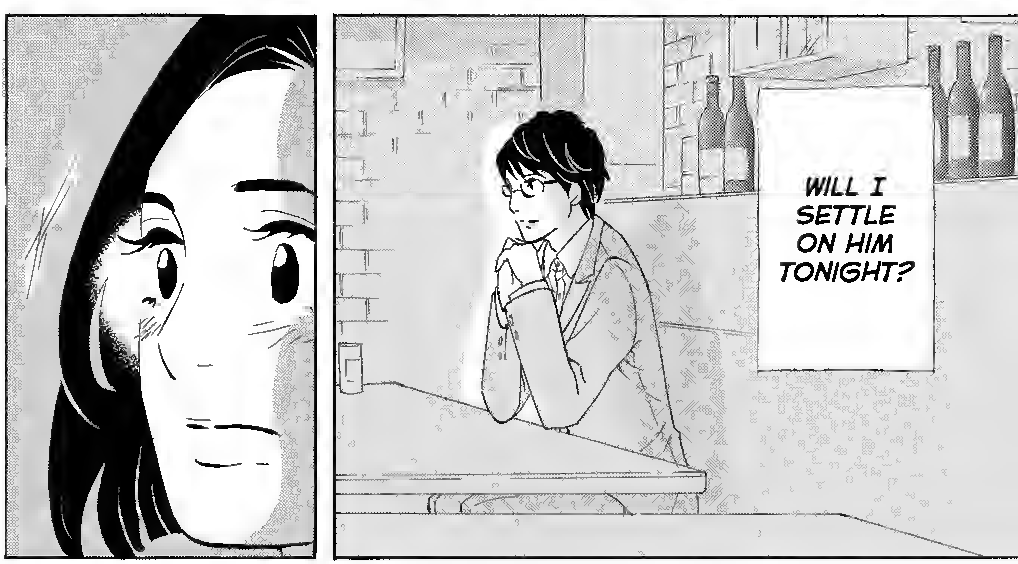
AND THAT DAY SOON CAME.
SONEA RI

WH-
WHAT A NIGHT-MARE ...
SCARIER THAN ANY HORROR MOVIE...
WHAM ガン
WHAM ガン
WHAM ガン
J-
JUST A DREAM?
WHUMP

WHOA... THIS IS WAY TOO LOW-CUT...
THAT'S THE POINT. YOU WANT HIM TO SEE THE GOODS.
THOSE DOUBLE-D'S ARE YOUR SELLING POINT, RINKO!!
DON'T YOU THINK I'VE GOT OTHER SELLING POINTS, MAYBE?
Like my face, or my personality
EXCUSE ME! WE'LL TAKE ALL THIS!
AND WE'LL NEED THE INSTALL-MENT PLAN!
GOD... THIS COSTS A LOT MORE THAN I WAS PLANNING TO SPEND ...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT!
YOU GOTTA WEAR NICE CLOTHES IN YOUR THIRTIES!
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU'RE WORKING FOR?
50,000 yen
For a knit one-piece?
THIS DRESS'LL MAKE HIM FALL FOR YOU ALL OVER AGAIN!
WITH-OUT A DOUBT!
CLENCH


CLACK
WE'VE ALWAYS STUCK OUR NOSES INTO EACH OTHERS' LOVE LIVES LIKE THIS...
THESE TWO...
You can do it!
THESE TWO...

CLACK
CLACK
CLACK
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
NOW THAT THEY'VE GOTTEN ME PUMPED UP...
AND...

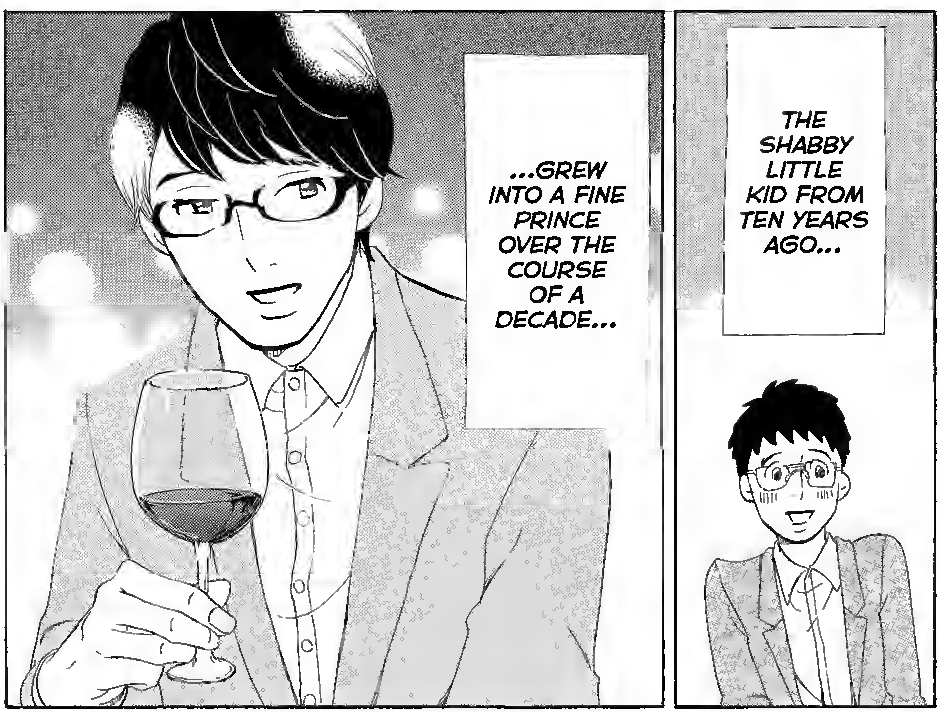

WILL I SETTLE ON HIM TONIGHT?

BA-DUMP
トゥン
RINKO!!
BEAM
はっ
LOOK AT HIM...
SMILING SO HAPPILY...
EVEN AFTER I OUMPEO HIM SO HARSHLY A OECAOE AGO...
HE MUST HAVE THE STRONG-EST HEART IN THE WORLD.

I THINK...
WE'LL START WITH TWO GLASSES OF SPARKLING WINE. AND GO AHEAD AND SELECT A WHITE WINE TO PAIR WITH OUR MEAL.
I RECOMMEND ONE OF OUR NATURAL WINES.
OH, THE NATURAL CHARDONNAY WAS NICE. THE ONE I HAD THE OTHER DAY.
HE KNOWS HOW TO ORDER WINE...
I'VE BEEN COMING HERE A LOT RECENTLY.
THE FOOD IS AMAZING, AND IT'S OPEN LATE, SO IT'S VERY CONVENIENT.
A COZY LITTLE BISTRO HIDDEN ON A BACK STREET...
YOU KNOW...
TEN YEARS AGO...
I HAD JUST MOVED TO TOKYO, SO I DIDN'T KNOW THE RESTAURANTS...
SO... WELL...
I TOOK YOU SOMEWHERE THAT DIDN'T FIT YOU...
I REALLY AM...
...SORRY ABOUT THAT NIGHT.
D-DON'T BE!
THE FOOD THERE WAS DELICIOUS...
Not that I remember much!
HERE, THEY SERVE SOUTHERN FRENCH COUNTRY CUISINE.
THE LIVER PÂTÉ IS VERY GOOD.
DO YOU EAT LIVER, RINKO?
EXCITED
OH, YES! I LOVE LIVER!
THEN LET'S ORDER SOME WITH PAIN DE CAMPAGNE! THEY BAKE IT THEMSELVES.
GLITTER

HUH?
UH-OH...
AND SO IS THE BREAD !!
THIS IS GOOD!
WOW!
SEE?

I MIGHT ACTUALLY BE HAVING FUN.


...GREW INTO A FINE PRINCE OVER THE COURSE OF A DECADE...
THE SHABBY LITTLE KID FROM TEN YEARS AGO...

AND RETURNED TO SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET.
WOW ...
WHAT A VIEW ...
TENANTS HERE ARE ALLOWED TO USE THE ROOF WHENEVER THEY WANT.
I HEAR YOU COULD EVEN USE THAT POOL BACK IN THE DAY...
HUH?! A POOL ?!
YES, BECAUSE THIS PLACE WAS BUILT FOR THE OLYMPICS, YOU KNOW.
WOW ...
YOU FOUND QUITE AN INTEREST-ING PLACE FOR YOUR OFFICE, RINKO...
HEHEH.
IT'S OLD, BUT I LIKE IT QUITE A BIT.
...
MR. HAYA-SAKA.

WHAT DID YOU WANT TO DISCUSS?
BLUSH
OH... I-I'M SORRY.
I ACTUALLY MEANT TO DISCUSS IT EARLIER...WHILE WE WERE EATING...
BUT, YOU KNOW, I'M A REGULAR THERE...AND IT'S SMALL, SO I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE EMBARRASSING IF THE STAFF OVERHEARD...
AHAHA!
WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THAT HERE!
WE'RE ALL ALONE.

...
RIGHT ...
THEN ...
I, UM... REALIZE ...
...THAT IN MY CURRENT POSITION... IT'S REALLY...I MEAN, DEFINITELY ...
...TEN TIMES WORSE THAN THAT TIME A DECADE AGO...
...FOR ME TO BE SAYING THIS...
...TO A WRITER I WORK WITH...
I AM WELL AWARE ...
...THAT IT'S A STRANGE THING TO ASK...
RUSTLE
IT MIGHT FREAK YOU OUT A LITTLE ...
MAYBE YOU'LL THINK I'M CREEPY ...
BUT...
NO MATTER WHAT, I WANTED YOU...
...TO UNDER STAND HOW I FEEL...

RINKO.
PLEASE DON'T LAUGH...
BA-DUMP
IS THAT... ANOTHER RING??
BVLGARI
I WON'T LAUGH ANY MORE!
WHAP
I'M SORRY!
ALL RIGHT!
AH!
YOU'RE ALREADY LAUGH-ING!
...
HEH?
ALL RIGHT.
R-
RINKO ...
I...
...
GO AHEAD.

FLASH
カッ
...I'M THINKING OF ASKING YOUR ASSISTANT MAMI OUT WITH THE INTENTION OF ONE DAY GETTING MARRIED!
BVLGARI

...I'M THINKING OF ASKING YOUR ASSISTANT MAMI OUT WITH THE INTENTION OF ONE DAY GETTING MARRIED!
BVLGARI

FLASH
カッ

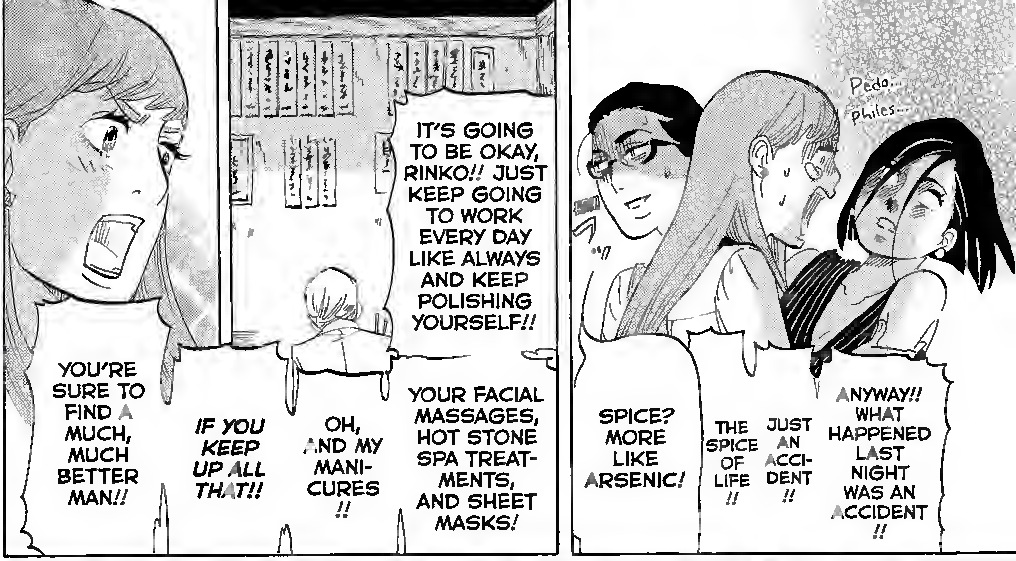
KA-
BOOM

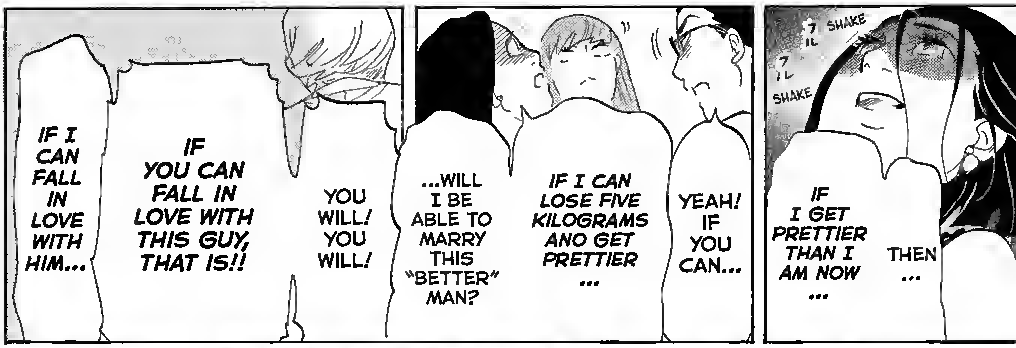
BOOM

KA-

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN SHE PUT THAT WEIRD RING ON YOUR FINGER THE OTHER DAY? REMEMBER HOW IT FIT JUST RIGHT?!
THAT'S HOW I... OH, DO YOU REMEMBER THAT RING FROM WHEN YOU DUMPED ME THOSE MANY, MANY YEARS AGO? I JUST TOOK IT OUT OF THE DRAWER AND DOWN TO BULGARI...
BVLGARI
...AND ASKED THE CLERK TO HELP ME PICK OUT A RING IN THAT SIZE THAT WOULD SUIT A YOUNG WOMAN LIKE MAMI!!
GLINK!
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WILL THIS WORK?
I WANTED TO GET YOUR OPINION BEFORE I GAVE IT TO HER!!
I MEAN ...
HUFF HUFF
...BECAUSE OF YOUR JOB, YOU KNOW THE FEMALE HEART BETTER THAN ANYONE!!
BOOM
ドーン
BOOM
ドーン
PUB

GLUG
GLUG
GLUG


IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY, RINKO!! JUST KEEP GOING TO WORK EVERY DAY LIKE ALWAYS AND KEEP POLISHING YOURSELF!!
YOUR FACIAL MASSAGES, HOT STONE SPA TREATMENTS, AND SHEET MASKS!
OH, AND MY MANICURES !!
IF YOU KEEP UP ALL THAT!!
YOU'RE SURE TO FIND A MUCH, MUCH BETTER MAN!!
Pedo... Philes...
ANYWAY!! WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT WAS AN ACCIDENT !!
JUST AN ACCIDENT !!
THE SPICE OF LIFE !!
SPICE? MORE LIKE ARSENIC!


IF I CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM...
IF YOU CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH THIS GUY, THAT IS!!
YOU WILL! YOU WILL!
...WILL I BE ABLE TO MARRY THIS "BETTER" MAN?
IF I CAN LOSE FIVE KILOGRAMS AND GET PRETTIER ...
YEAH! IF YOU CAN...
IF I GET PRETTIER THAN I AM NOW ...
THEN ...
SHAKE
SHAKE

YOU'RE BEING LOUD AGAIN.
EXCUSE ME, LADIES.
DAD!! CODFISH MILT AND LIVER STEAKS!!
ALL RIGHT!! TONIGHT, WE'RE HAVING A GIRLS' NIGHT OUT UNTIL MORNING !!
I'LL HAVE LIQUOR ON THE ROCKS!

HUH ...?!
I COME TO THIS PUB BECAUSE I LIKE THE ATMOSPHERE.
IF YOU WANT TO DO ALL THIS GIRL TALK, COULD YOU PLEASE TAKE IT TO THE PRIVATE FANCY DINING PLACE NEXT DOOR?
WHA?!
YOU KEEP BLABBERING ON ABOUT THESE "GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT" EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE NOT GIRLS ANYMORE...
AND ABOUT MARRYING THIS GREAT GUY WHO DOESN'T EVEN EXIST ...
I'M HONESTLY IMPRESSED ...
THAT WOMEN YOUR AGE CAN GET SO WORKED UP ABOUT THESE BASELESS "WHAT-IF" STORIES ABOUT "IF YOU CAN LOSE WEIGHT" OR "IF YOU CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH HIM"...
GULP
IF YOU WANT MY OPINION, THAT ISN'T A GIRLS' NIGHT OUT...
IT'S JUST AN OLD MAIDS' GOSSIP CIRCLE.
AM I RIGHT?
WELL, NO MATTER.
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIVES, WHY DON'T YOU LADIES ...

...JUST KEEP DRINKING TO YOUR WHAT-IF STORIES!
YOU WHAT-IF WOMEN!!

I THINK I WENT TOO FAR.
MAYBE ...
...
OH, CRAP.
WELP.
TIME TO MAKE MY ESCAPE.
POPS!! THE CHECK!!
SPROING
にょーん
TMP スタ
TMP スタ
TMP スタ

HAVE FUN...
...LADIES!
WE SPENT ALL DUR TIME WONDERING "WHAT IF," THEN DNE DAY WDKE UP AND WE WERE 33.
AND IT APPEARS ...
RATTLE
RATTLE
THINK
...WE'RE ALL OUT OF TIME.

ACT
2
THE WHAT-IF GIRLS AND THE BLONDE MAN
ARAREBA

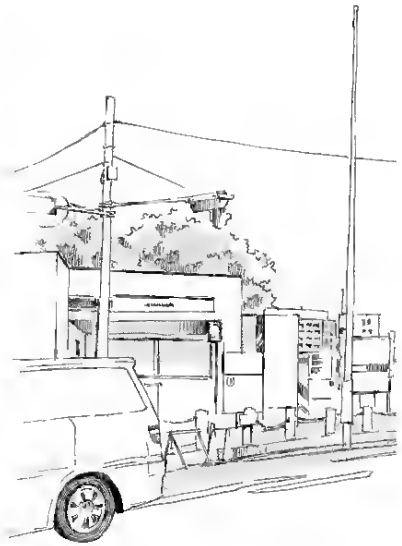
I KNOW ALL THESE "WHAT-IFS" AREN'T GOING TO GET ME ANYWHERE ...

...BUT I STILL FIND MYSELF THINKING, IN MY HUNGOVER STATE...

...THAT IF I HAD ACCEPTED HIS PROPOSAL TEN YEARS AGO...

...IF MY HEART HAD BEEN A LITTLE LARGER ...

I MIGHT NOT BE ALONE TODAY.



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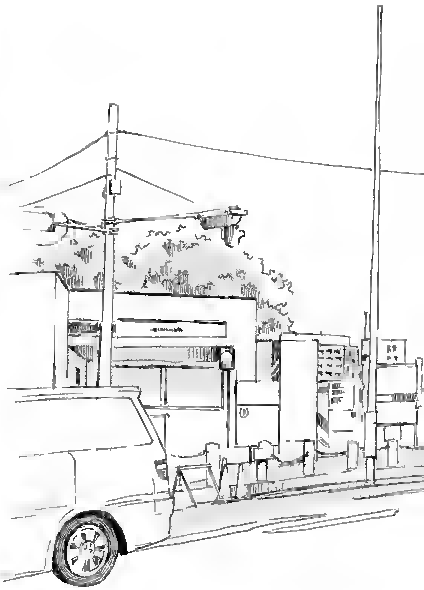
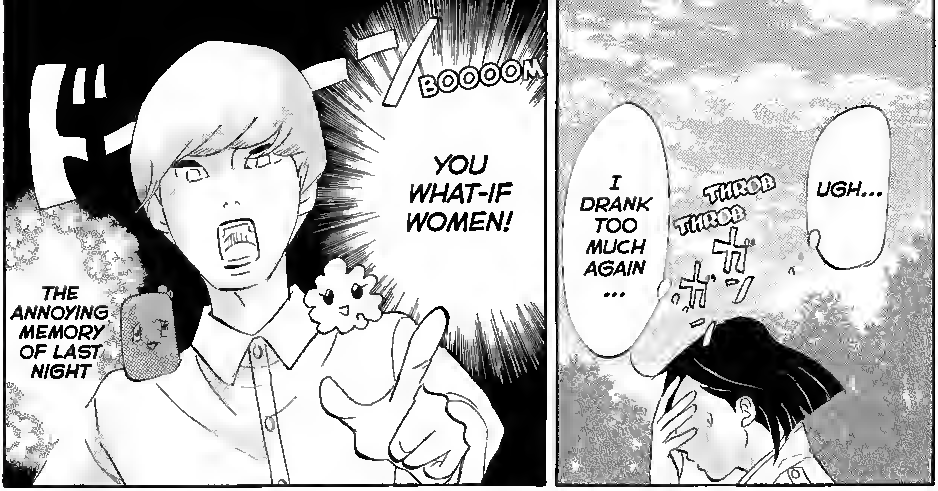
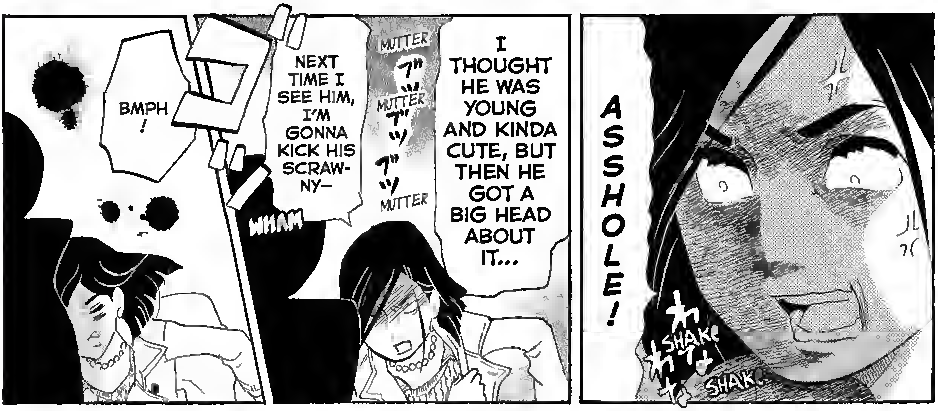
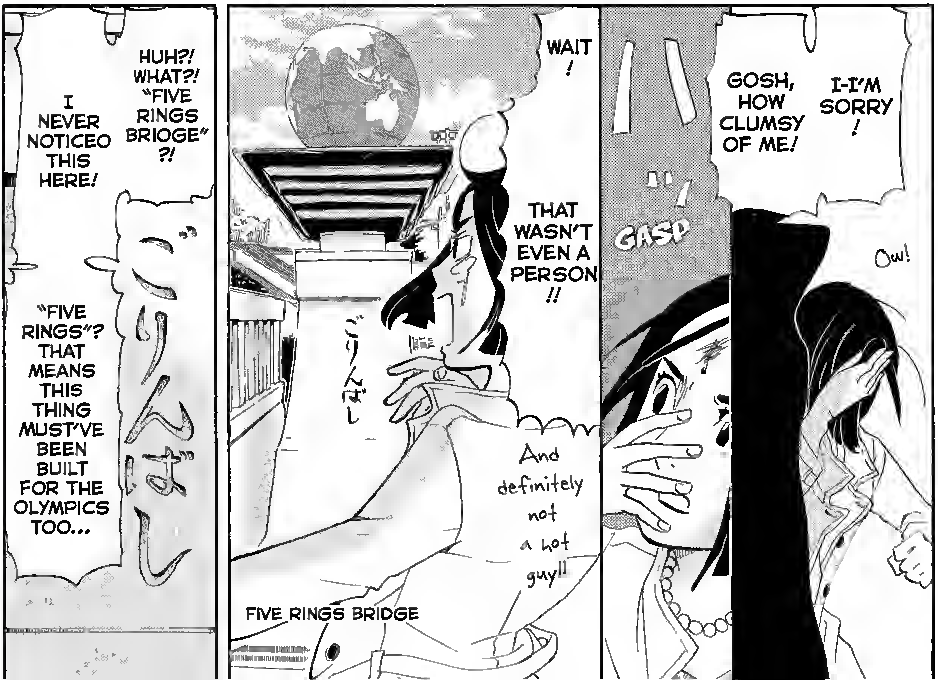


...IF MY HEART HAD BEEN A LITTLE LARGER ...

I MIGHT NOT BE ALONE TODAY.


BOOOOM
YOU WHAT-IF WOMEN!
THE ANNOYING MEMORY OF LAST NIGHT
I DRANK TOO MUCH AGAIN ...
THROB THROB
UGH...


BMPH!
NEXT TIME I SEE HIM, I'M GONNA KICK HIS SCRAWNY—
WHAM
MUTTER
I THOUGHT HE WAS YOUNG AND KINDA CUTE, BUT THEN HE GOT A BIG HEAD ABOUT IT...
ASSHOLE!
SHAKE
SHAK

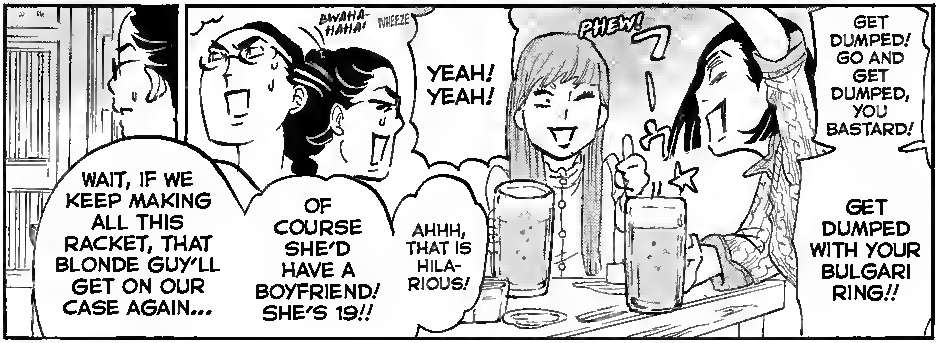

HUH?! WHAT?! "FIVE RINGS BRIOGE"?!
I NEVER NOTICED THIS HERE!
"FIVE RINGS"? THAT MEANS THIS THING MUST'VE BEEN BUILT FOR THE OLYMPICS TOO...
WAIT!
THAT WASN'T EVEN A PERSON!!
And definitely not a hot guy!!
FIVE RINGS BRIDGE
GOSH, HOW CLUMSY OF ME!
I-I'M SORRY!
GASP
Ow!

AHAHAHAHA
THAT'S HILARIOUS, RINKO!
YOU ACTUALLY RAN INTO IT HARD ENOUGH TO DRAW BLOOD?!
THERE'S A GLOBE ON TOP ...
ごりんばし
MY HEART HURTS MORE THAN MY FORE-HEAD...
I can't look directly at that firm, 19-year-old skin...
THANK YOU... MAM! ...
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
SORRY FOR USING ONE OF MY BANDAIDS, BUT...
PLAP
THERE! NOW YOU'RE OKAY!
THE TRUTH IS...
T-T...
YES?
I...
M-MAM! ...
YES?
HOW ABOUT THAT? YOU THINK HE WANTS TO USE ME TO GET TO YOU OR SOME-THING?
HE INVIT-ED ME OUT TO DINNER TONIGHT, JUST THE TWO OF US!
HEY, LISTEN TO THIS! I GOT THIS WEIRD TEXT FROM MR. HAYASAKA LAST NIGHT!
SHUNK
SHUNK
SHUNK

RINKO'S BEST
...NEVER BEEN ABLE TO STAND...MR. HAYASAKA...
I'VE ...
HUH ?!
REALLY ?!
Hehe-heh-
THAT'S RIGHT ...
TH-
YOU KNOW !!
HE IS KINDA CREEPY SOME-TIMES!
LIKE, SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T TELL IF HE'S BEING TIMID OR JUST PLAIN RUDE!
WHAT ABOUT YOU... MAMI?
WHAT DO YOU... THINK OF HIM?
WHAAAAAAT?!
SEE?
EHEHEH! WANNA SEE A PICTURE? HE'S SOOO HAND-SOME!
FWIP
RIGHT NOW, I'M EVEN DATING A HIGH SCHOOLER!
I PREFER YOUNGER GUYS!
OH, I CAN'T HANDLE OLDER MEN!
ISN'T HE SO, SO, SOOO CUTE? HE LOOKS JUST A BIT LIKE THAT MODEL, KEY.
THE OTHER DAY, A STREET-SNAP OF HIM ON OMOTESANDO APPEARED IN SNAP MAGAZINE!
WOW... A HIGH SCHOOLER DRESSED LIKE THAT...
IN FACT... WHOA...
SO YOU'VE GOT A BOY-FRIEND ...
I GUESS YOU WOULD ...
SURE DO! I'VE NEVER NOT HAD ONE! NOT SINCE MIDDLE SCHOOL!
SO SHE DOES ...
SO SHE DOES ...

JKUst
Four! Alarm!!
Four! Alarm!!
CHACK
So she does...
...
HARAJUKU
GASP
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
NHAM
酒処
PUB
COME IN AND TAKE IT EASY!

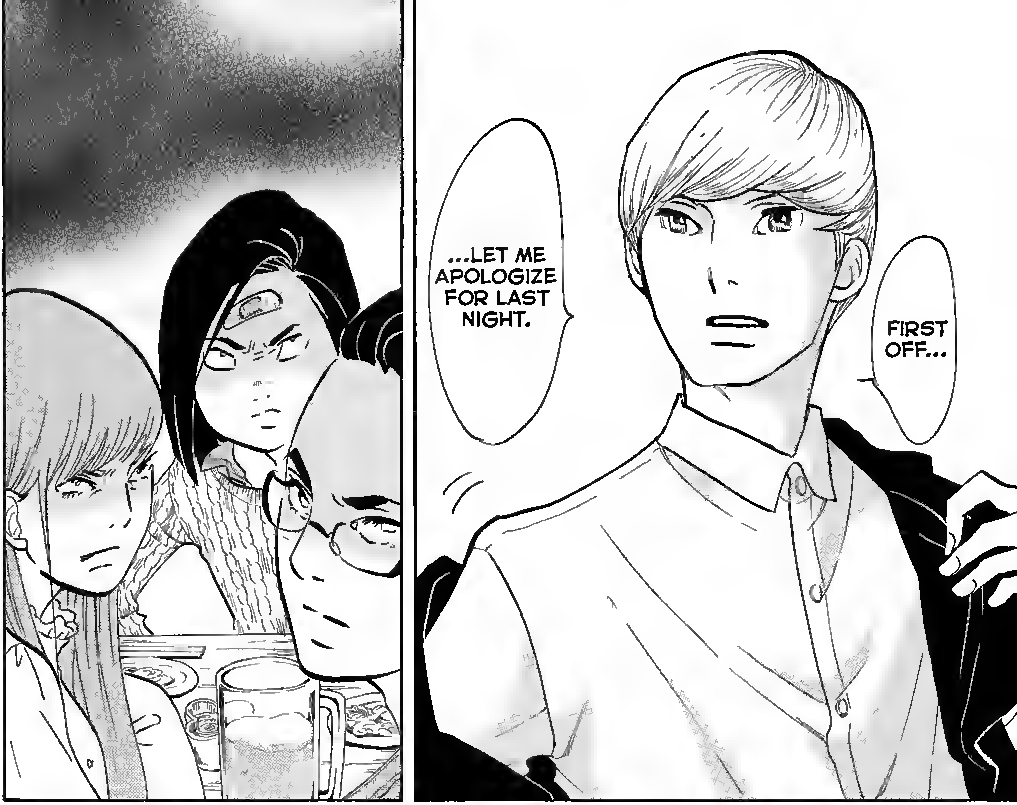
HAHAHAHA!
THINK
HA!
HAHA-HAHA!
HAHA-HAHA!
SUCK ON THAT !!

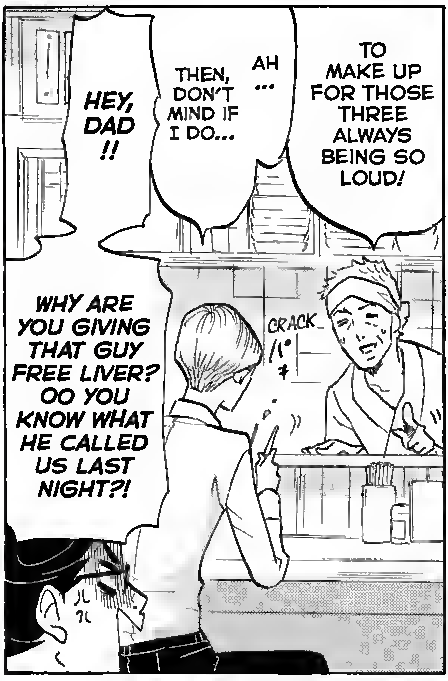

WAIT, IF WE KEEP MAKING ALL THIS RACKET, THAT BLONDE GUY'LL GET ON OUR CASE AGAIN...
BWAHA-HAHA! WHEEZE
OF COURSE SHE'D HAVE A BOYFRIEND! SHE'S 19!!
AHHH, THAT IS HILA-RIOUS!
YEAH! YEAH!
PHEW
GET DUMPED! GO AND GET DUMPED, YOU BASTARD!
GET DUMPED WITH YOUR BULGARI RING!!

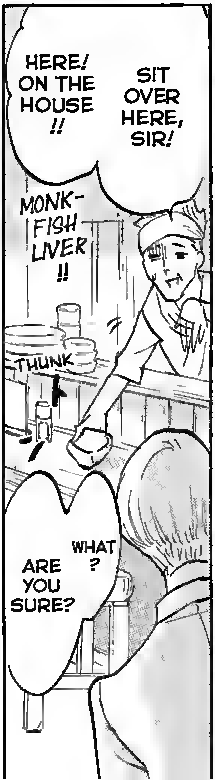
HE CALLED IT AN "OLD MAIDS' GOSSIP CIRCLE" ...
YOU KNOW, OUR GIRLS' NIGHT OUTS ...
WAIT, WHAT DID HE CALL IT?
I'VE NEVER BEEN TOLD OFF THAT BAD BY A STRANGER IN A BAR BEFORE...

HE'S GOT A BIG HEAD JUST BECAUSE HE'S KIND OF GOOD-LOOKING ...
WASN'T HE JUST THE WORST?
HE'S NOT HERE TONIGHT!
GOOD!

行き遅れ女の井戸端会議
OLD MAIDS' GOSSIP CIRCLE
The extent of the damage taken after thinking it over calmly a day later
スカタタタ!
KA-BOOOM
ギュ
SKREEK
山田く
YAMADA!
A GAGGLE OF WHAT-IF-STORY-TELLING WHAT-IF GIRLS...
AND... HE CALLED US...
THAT BASTARD! THAT'S PRETTY GOOO ONE, THOUGH! GIVE THE GUY A CUSHION!
ガ
THUNK
ラ
!
YAMADA-KUN?
UGH...
THEY'RE HERE AGAIN.

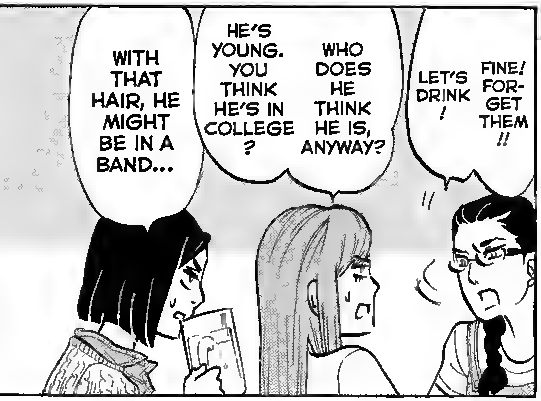

...LET ME APOLOGIZE FOR LAST NIGHT.
FIRST OFF...

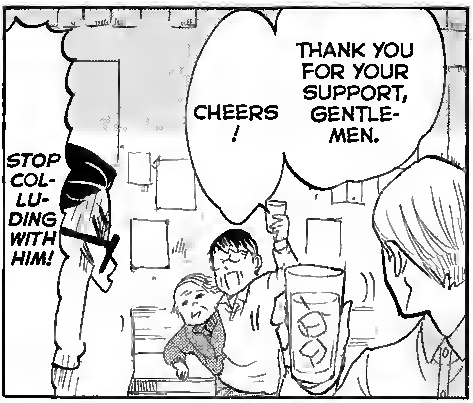

HEY, DAD !!
THEN, DON'T MIND IF I DO...
AH ...
TO MAKE UP FOR THOSE THREE ALWAYS BEING SO LOUD!
WHY ARE YOU GIVING THAT GUY FREE LIVER? OO YOU KNOW WHAT HE CALLED US LAST NIGHT?!
CRACK

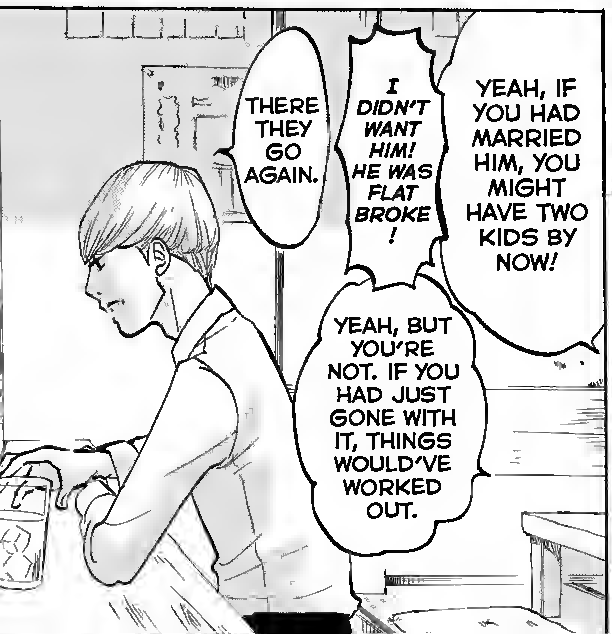

HERE! ON THE HOUSE !!
SIT OVER HERE, SIR!
MONK-FISH LIVER !!
THUNK
ARE YOU SURE?
WHAT ?

I'M GONNA SIT IN THE CORNER ...
FWISH
YIKES!

THEY SPEND EVERY DAY HERE DRINKING ALONE INSTEAD OF FINDING HUSBANDS!
YOU'RE A GENIUS, SON!!
OH, THAT WAS A GOOD ONE!
NOD NOD
SOMETHING ABOUT "WHAT-IF" WOMEN, RIGHT?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE MISOGYNY TO ME!


WITH THAT HAIR, HE MIGHT BE IN A BAND...
HE'S YOUNG. YOU THINK HE'S IN COLLEGE?
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS, ANYWAY?
LET'S DRINK!
FINE! FORGET THEM!!


STOP COLLUDING WITH HIM!
CHEERS!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, GENTLEMEN.


THERE THEY GO AGAIN.
I DIDN'T WANT HIM! HE WAS FLAT BROKE!
YEAH, IF YOU HAD MARRIED HIM, YOU MIGHT HAVE TWO KIDS BY NOW!
YEAH, BUT YOU'RE NOT. IF YOU HAD JUST GONE WITH IT, THINGS WOULD'VE WORKED OUT.

HEY, YOU WENT OUT WITH ONE ONCE, DIDN'T YOU?
THEY'RE ALL IDIOTS!
I HATE MUSICIANS!
FWAP
THAT WAS AGES AGO! DON'T BRING IT UP NOW!

I WANTED TO DRINK TO FORGET ...

ALL THOSE 30-YEAR-OLD MEN WHO START PANTING AFTER ANY YOUNG CHICK SHOULD ALL DIE IN AN EXPLO-SION!

I KNOW. PLUS, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ANYONE WHO'D PROPOSE RIGHT AWAY TO A 19-YEAR-OLD WITH HALF A HEAD OF PINK HAIR WHO ONLY DRESSES IN HARAJUKU FASHION.

BUT IT STILL SERVES THAT PEDO RIGHT.

AND BOUGHT CLOTHES JUST FOR THE OCCASION...

I WENT OUT...

I MEAN...

...BUT THE DAMAGE THIS TIME WAS PRETTY BIG.

THE SHOES WERE A NICE SET OF BEIGE PUMPS TO ACCENTUATE THE LEGS...

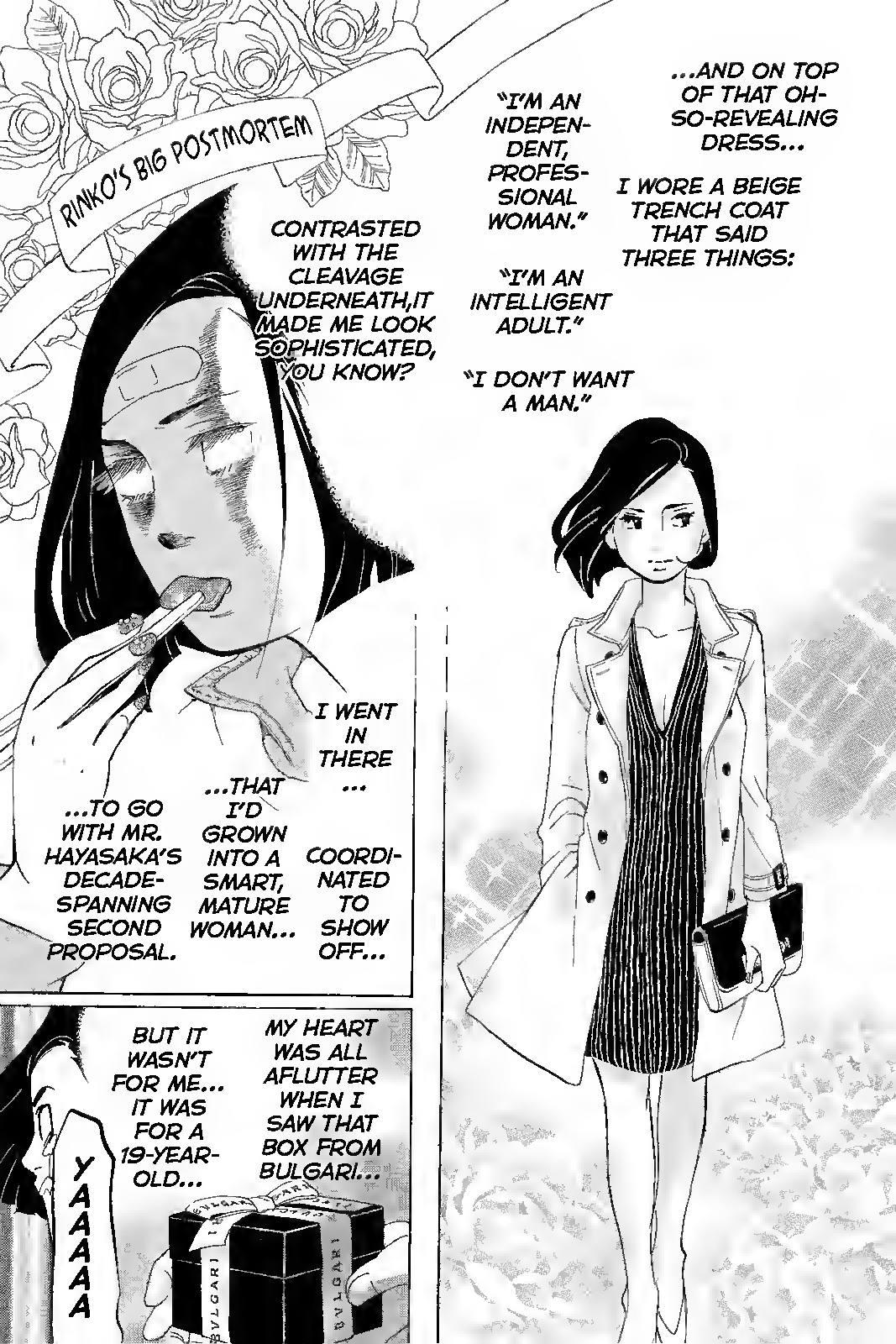
...WITH 3.5 INCH HEELS I'D NORMALLY NEVER WEAR...

THE BAG WAS AN ELEGANT ENAMEL CLUTCH...

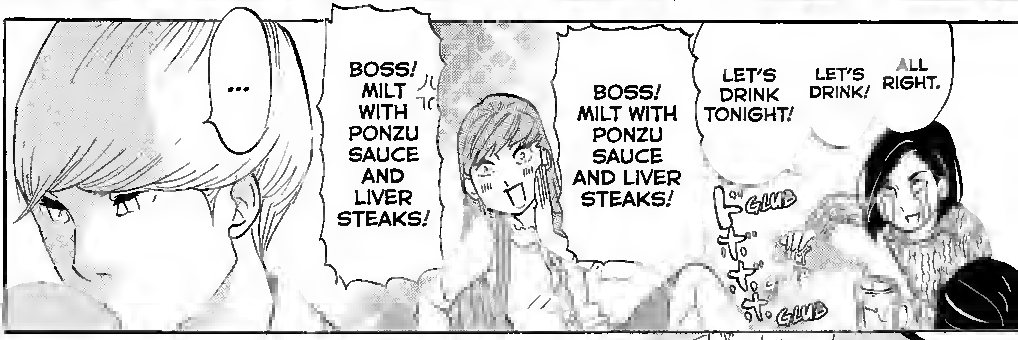
AND IT COST 50,000 ...

BUT THE CHEST WAS CUT NICE AND DEEP FOR THE CLEAVAGE APPEAL...

...AND IT WAS ONE OF THOSE LITTLE "I DIDN'T PUT IN VERY MUCH EFFORT FOR THE LIKES OF YOU" BLACK DRESSES.

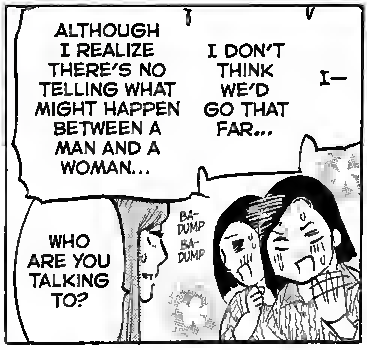

RINKO'S BIG POSTMORTEM
CONTRASTED WITH THE CLEAVAGE UNDERNEATH, IT MADE ME LOOK SOPHISTICATED, YOU KNOW?
...TO GO WITH MR. HAYASAKA'S DECADE-SPANNING SECOND PROPOSAL.
...THAT I'D GROWN INTO A SMART, MATURE WOMAN...
I WENT IN THERE ...
COORDINATED TO SHOW OFF...
"I'M AN INDEPENDENT, PROFESSIONAL WOMAN."
"I'M AN INTELLIGENT ADULT."
"I DON'T WANT A MAN."
...AND ON TOP OF THAT OH-SO-REVEALING DRESS...
I WORE A BEIGE TRENCH COAT THAT SAID THREE THINGS:
YAAAAA
BUT IT WASN'T FOR ME... IT WAS FOR A 19-YEAR-OLD...
MY HEART WAS ALL AFLUTTER WHEN I SAW THAT BOX FROM BULGARI...
BVLGARI
BVLGARI

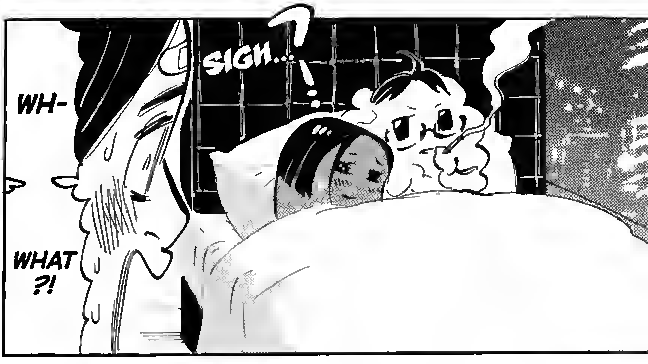
AAAAAARGH!!
RINKO?!
YEOW!
RINKO?!
THAT'S WHERE I HIT IT EARLIER!!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
ARE YOU DRUNK ALREADY?!
NO... SORRY... I JUST...
...WANTED TO LOSE SOME MEMORIES...


ALL RIGHT.
LET'S DRINK!
LET'S DRINK TONIGHT!
BOSS! MILT WITH PONZU SAUCE AND LIVER STEAKS!
BOSS! MILT WITH PONZU SAUCE AND LIVER STEAKS!
...

BUT I'M GLAD...
...MAMI HAS A BOYFRIEND.
I WONDER WHAT MR. HAYASAKA WILL DO.
WILL HE RETURN THAT RING AFTER SHE REJECTS HIM?
NO, THAT IDIOT'LL PROBABLY GO AFTER HER AGAIN.

OR MAYBE ...
...HE'LL JUMP RIGHT TO THE NEXT YOUNG GIRL..
RISE
RINKO!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... LOVE ISN'T QUITE THAT SIMPLE?
THAT'S RIGHT. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
"OH! I'VE BEEN DUMPED! OH! ON TO THE NEXT ONE!"
THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT GOES. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
THERE YOU ARE AGAIN ...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...MR. HAYASAKA WILL BE DEVASTATED IF HE GETS DUMPED ?
AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, YOU SHOULD COMFORT HIM. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
HUH ?!
STOP IT. WHY SHOULD I COMFORT H–
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON HE'S TOLD ABOUT HIS FEELINGS FOR MAMI?
HE MAY NOT BE IN LOVE WITH YOU ANYMORE, BUT HE STILL DEPENDS ON YOU. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
BEING DEPENDED ON DOESN'T EXACTLY MAKE ME HAPPY, YOU KNOW...
OH, NO, NO, NO.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU LISTEN TO ME, RINKO?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU THREE ARE OUT OF TIME?
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO NURTURE YOUR CONNECTIONS AND TAKE EVERY CHANCE AT ROMANCE, SO YOU'RE PREPARED FOR YOUR NEXT SHOT. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
FWIP
THE CHANCES OF BECOMING A COUPLE ON THE SECOND TRY IS 30%!!
TAKE EVERY CHANCE?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... SINCE MR. HAYASAKA HAS ALREADY FALLEN FOR YOU ONCE...
THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT!! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!


ALTHOUGH I REALIZE THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN...
I DON'T THINK WE'D GO THAT FAR...
I—
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
BA-DUMP BA-DUMP



ゲラ HA HA HA ゲラ HA! BWA

...
I BET YOU'RE A PEDO TOO, RIGHT?!
BEEP
ピ
HEY, YEAH!
YOU!
BLONDIE!
AH!
NOW WE JUST HAVE TO WAIT FOR THAT PEDO TO GET REJECT-
I FEEL A LOT BETTER!
PHEW!
ガラ
THUNK
IGNORE
WHY ARE YOU BLONDE, ANYWAY?
LISTEN...
ゲラ
HEY! HEY!
YES!!
ALL JAPANESE MEN ARE PEDOS!
RATTLE
ガラ
RATTLE
ガラ
CRASH
ガシャン
KA-BAM
ドーン
WHAP
WHOA!
HEY!
STAGGER
EEK!
ガラ
WHAP
!

HEY, YOU!!
STOP PLAYING WITH YOUR PHONE AND GIVE US A HAND!
UGH...
NO, NOT REAL-LY...
RINKO! ARE YOU OKAY?!
WHOA!
UGH—
OUCH!
DIDN'T YOU DECIDE TO GO DRINKING AND DECIDE TO GET WASTED?
...
WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU?
YOU KNOW MEN WILL ONLY HELP YOU UP WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK IF YOU'RE UNDER 25, RIGHT?
THOSE POOR, BEAUTIFUL CAMELLIAS...
SIGH...
WHA?!

YOU'RE NOT GIRLS ANYMORE, ARE YOU, LADIES?
IN YOUR THIRTIES, YOU HAVE TO STAND UP ON YOUR OWN!!
WE'RE NOT...
IS THAT RIGHT?
HUH?
... GIRLS ?
WE'RE NOT...
...GIRLS ANY-MORE?

THERE ARE SIX MORE YEARS UNTIL THE OLYMPICS.
THEN, WE'LL BE 40.
ごりんばし
FIVE RINGS BRIDGE
IF WE'RE STILL ALONE IN SIX YEARS...
HOW WILL WE LOOK, AS WE WALK THROUGH...

...REGRETTING THAT OUR 33-YEAR-OLD SELVES DIDN'T PUT IN ANY WORK TOWARDS FINDING HUSBANDS, AND SPENT ALL OUR TIME...
WILL WE BE WALKING ALONG...
...THE FESTIVE, OLYMPIC STREETS OF TOKYO?
...DRINKING WITH THE GIRLS?
...DR IF WE HAD ONLY TRIED HARDER ...
...AND TELL MORE WHAT-IF STORIES ABOUT WHETHER THINGS WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF WE DID THIS...
AND THEN, WILL WE GO RIGHT BACK TO THAT SAME BAR...
...AND CONTINUE OUR GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT EVEN WHEN WE'RE 40?
...AS WE DRINK...

IN FACT, I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF WE'RE EVER GOING TO MEET PEOPLE WE CAN FALL IN LOVE WITH IN THE FIRST PLACE.

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR ALL THAT.

IF THINGS GO WELL, THAT'S GREAT, BUT IF NOT, WE'LL HAVE TO START ALL OVER AGAIN.

TELLING HIM HOW WE FEEL...

FALLING IN LOVE WITH HIM...

FINDING A NEW MAN...

BECAUSE IF I'M NOT A "GIRL" ANYMORE...

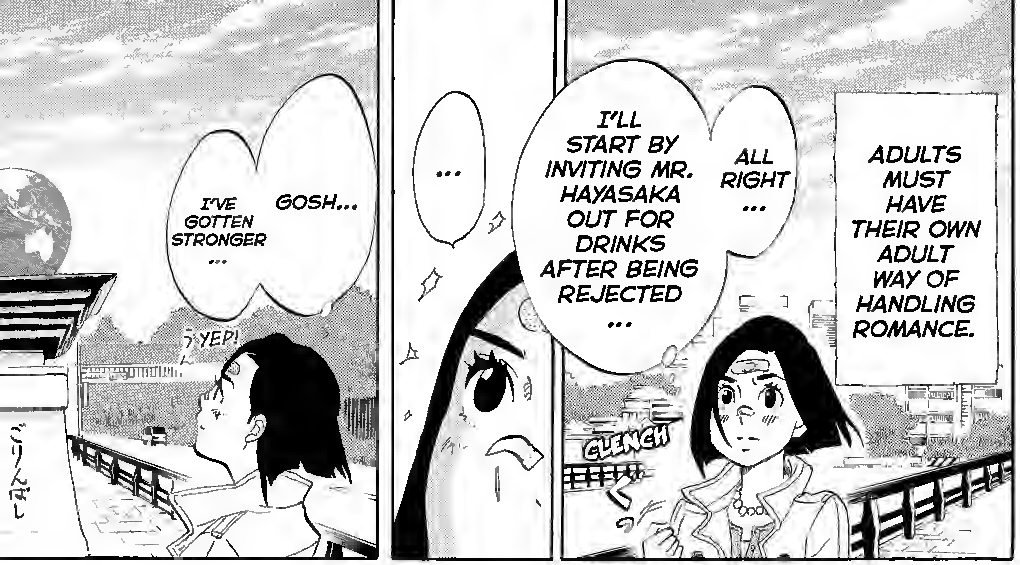
...THEN I CAN'T HAVE ONE OF THOSE STORYBOOK ROMANCES ANYWAYS.

...IS AN OPTION TOO.

I FEEL LIKE NURTURING THOSE EMOTIONS I FELT TOWARDS MR. HAYASAKA BACK THEN...

IN THAT CASE...

...MAYBE I'LL STICK IT OUT JUST A LITTLE LONGER.


ADULTS MUST HAVE THEIR OWN ADULT WAY OF HANDLING ROMANCE.
ALL RIGHT ...
I'LL START BY INVITING MR. HAYASAKA OUT FOR DRINKS AFTER BEING REJECTED ...
...
GLENCH
GOSH... I'VE GOTTEN STRONGER ...
YEP!

GOOD MORNING!
RINKO ... THIS IS SOOO SUP-RISING, BUT...
LAST NIGHT... MR. HAYASAKA ASKED ME OUT...
Hello
YEP! I ALREADY HEARD.
SO? WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU TOLD HIM YOU HAVE A BOY-FRIEND?
SMILE

AFTER WE TALKED FOR A BIT, I GOT TO THINKING HE MIGHT NOT BE SO BAD, YOU KNOW?
ACTUALLY, I DECIDED TO GIVE IT A SHOT!!
SPARKLE
WHAT ABOUT ...
YOUR BOY-FRIEND?
WH-
WAIT ...
MAMI?
UM ...
OLDER MEN HAVE SO MUCH MONEY! AM I RIGHT?
IT HAD TO BE EXPEN-SIVE, RIGHT?!
LOOK AT THIS! IT'S A RING FROM... BULGARI?
IT WAS THIS... WHAT WAS IT? SUPER-FANCY PLACE IN HAKONE... SOME FAMOUS THING THERE, YOU KNOW...
SO WE'RE GOING TO A HOT SPRINGS TOGETHER THIS WEEK-END!
AND MR. HAYASAKA SAID THAT WAS OKAY TOO!
I MEAN, MY BOYFRIEND'S ONLY IN HIGH SCHOOL, SO WHO KNOWS WHAT'LL HAPPEN WITH HIM IN THE FUTURE?
I THINK I'LL GO OUT WITH THEM BOTH FOR A WHILE!!
OH, WELL!

I HEAR THERE ARE OPEN-AIR BATHS ATTACHED TO THE HOTEL ROOMS...
AND HE SAID THE FOOD'S REALLY GOOD, TOO.
CRICK
CRUNCH
WHOOSH
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WE WERE RIGHT ?!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU SHOULD HAVE GIVEN IT A SHOT WITH HIM TEN YEARS AGO, RINKO?
IF YOU HAD DONE THAT, YOU MIGHT BE A BIG-SHOT SCRIPTWRITER WITH A GREAT JOB AND A REAL DIRECTOR FOR A HUSBAND!! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

I CAN'T STAND UP.

HA HA HA HA HA HA

SPLIT

FOR LOOKING DOWN ON A MAN BECAUSE OF HOW HE LOOKS! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THIS IS YOUR PAYBACK?

BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET BACK ON MY FEET.

THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY, MISTER.

IN YOUR THIRTIES, YOU HAVE TO STAND UP ON YOUR OWN!!

...AND LAUGHED AT THE YOUNG GIRLS WHO SPENT ALL THEIR TIME GOING TO MIXERS...

WE PITIED ALL OUR CLASSMATES WHO MARRIED BORING GUYS...

...AND COMPLAINED ABOUT HOW WE NEVER MET ANY GOOD MEN...OR HOW THERE WEREN'T ANY GOOD MEN...

I MEAN, FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS...

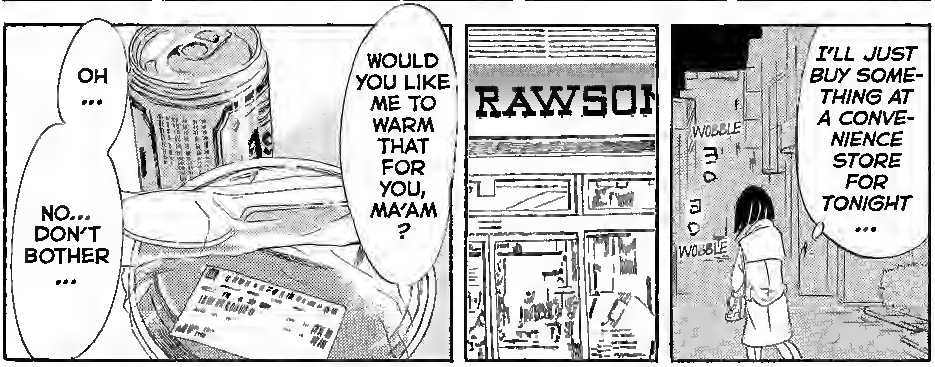
...ALL WE'VE DONE IS GONE DRINKING UNDER THE NAME "GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT"...

...WATCHING EVERYONE ELSE PLAY THEIR HEARTS OUT...
...SITTING ON THE BENCH...
BUT HERE WE ARE IN OUR THIRTIES...
...WHILE WE RUN OUR MOUTHS LIKE WE KNOW BETTER THAN THEM.
... CONFIDENT THAT WE COULD JOIN IN ANYTIME.
STILL WEARING OUR UNIFORMS...

THEN IN THE BOTTOM OF THE NINTH WITH TWO OUTS AND THE BASES LOADED, I STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE TO PINCH HIT.
SINCE I'D BEEN KEPT WAITING SO LONG, I STEPPED UP TO BAT BELIEVING I'D BE THE BIG HERO WHO TURNED THIS GAME AROUND WITH A HOME RUN.
BUT ...
WHIFF
...
HUH?
RINKO!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOUR SWING'S GOTTEN A LOT SLOWER SINCE YOUR TWENTIES?
YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED IN SO LONG, YOU'VE LOST YOUR EDGE! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

SO...
...YOU HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THE TEAM!
NOOO
アアアア!!!
PLOP
PLOP

SIGH...
I'M TIRED...
THIS ISN'T EVEN WORTH CALLING A FOUR ALARM OVER...
Not after yesterday
Four Alarm!!!!
BEEP
...


OH...
NO... DON'T BOTHER...
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO WARM THAT FOR YOU, MA'AM?
RAWSON
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
I'LL JUST BUY SOMETHING AT A CONVENIENCE STORE FOR TONIGHT...

...
SPECIAL 特集
大人の恋のはじめかた
HOW TO BEGIN A MATURE RELATIONSHIP

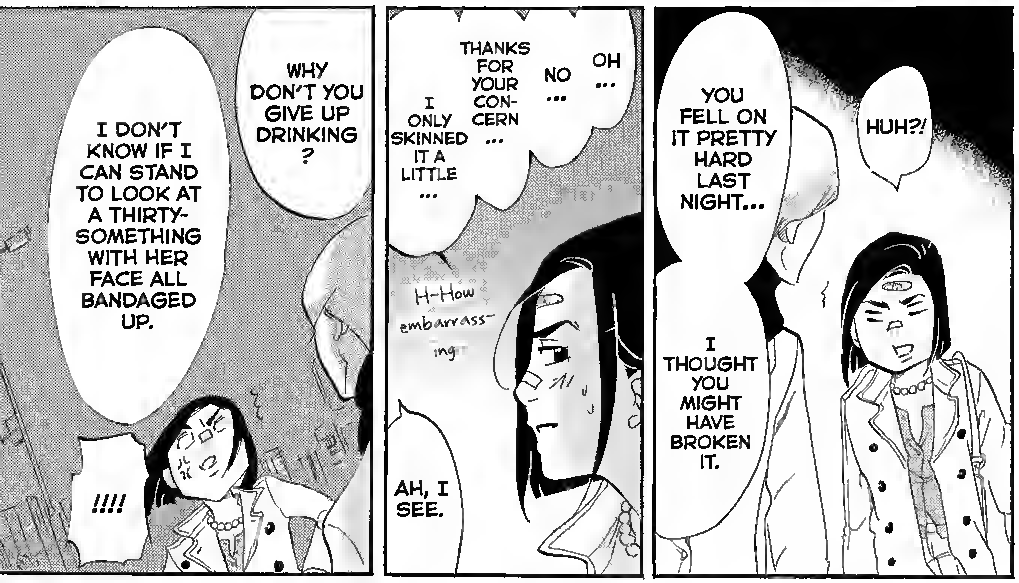
ごりんばし
FIVE RINGS BRIDGE
WOBBLE
WOBBLE
HEH...
I BOUGHT IT, YOU BAS-TARDS!
Come again!
WHAT A PAIN IN THE ASS!
THEY'RE ALWAYS SHOOTING SOME-THING HERE...
HMM?
WHAT'S THAT?
OH...
THEY'RE DOING SOME SORT OF SHOOT...
TURN
I'LL TAKE A DIFFERENT WAY HOME.
WHOA!
BUMP
DAMN IT...
I RAN INTO THAT STUPID GLOBE AGAIN...
HUH?
HUH?!
It talked?

IT'S MS. WHAT-IF!
WHAT A SHOCK!

WH-
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
SAY...
WHY'D YOU TURN AROUND SO FAST, MA'AM?
I can't handle that person-ality of yours!!
DON'T CALL ME "MA'AM"!!
I-I'M JUST THIRTY-SOMETHING!!
THERE IT IS AGAIN.
GRR!
YOUR ESCAPIST EUPHEMISMS.
I'M NOT ESCAPING ANYTHING!!
AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ANYWAY?!
THIS IS MY TERRITORY!
HUH?
A FILM SHOOT.
WE'RE FILMING A VIDEO FOR MY FRIEND'S BAND.

WELL, SEE YOU AROUND!
OH.
COM-ING!
OH.
GRR! GRR!
HEY!! WE'RE ABOUT TO START!
HA!
A MUSIC VIDEO ?!
YOU YOUNG PEOPLE SURE KNOW HOW TO HAVE FUN!
YES, WELL.
IT'S MORE FUN THAN YOUR GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT.

...FEELING ALL RIGHT?
IS YOUR NOSE...


WHY DON'T YOU GIVE UP DRINKING?
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN STAND TO LOOK AT A THIRTY-SOMETHING WITH HER FACE ALL BANDAGED UP.
!!!!
OH...
NO...
THANKS FOR YOUR CON-CERN...
I ONLY SKINNED IT A LITTLE...
H-How embarrass-ing
AH, I SEE.
HUH?!
YOU FELL ON IT PRETTY HARD LAST NIGHT...
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE BROKEN IT.

I'M NOT ...
...GONNA STOP DRINKING!
I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOU LECTURE ME ABOUT IT!
OH, YOU DON'T?
THEN HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
Hey!! We're starting!
すいませーん
SORRY!
WHO DOES THAT PUNK THINK HE IS?
HE TALKS LIKE THAT, EVEN WHEN HE'S SOBER ...
I HOPE I NEVER RUN INTO HIM AGAIN!!
I NEVER WANNA SEE HIS FACE IN OUR PUB!!
ムカムカ
GRRR!
ムカー
GRRR!
ドサッ
FLOP
GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR "MUSIC VIDEO." FRIGGIN' AMATEURS ...
PROBABLY IN HIS COLLEGE'S FILM CLUB. OR MAYBE HE'S A FILM MAJOR.
HOW LAME!
A MUSIC VIDEO!!
THE LITTLE BRAT!!
PTOO!

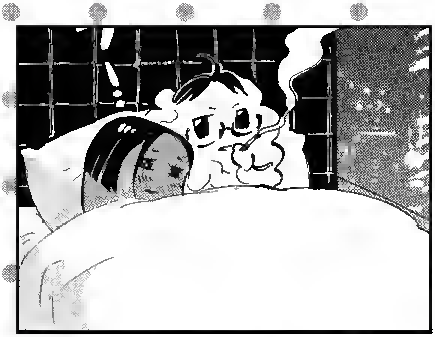
DING

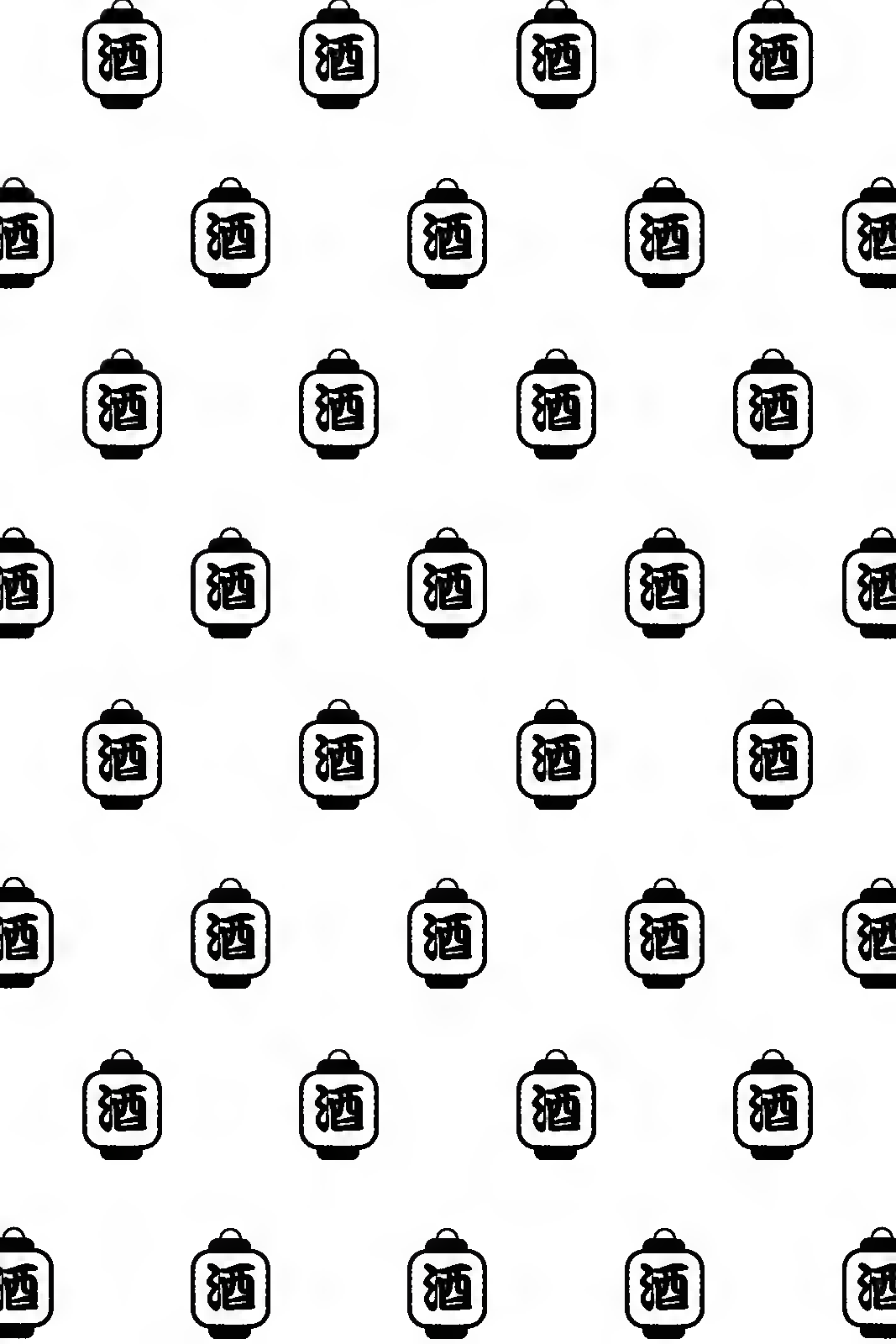
...EATING A CONVENIENCE STORE DINNER ALL ALONE.
HERE I AM, GAZING OUT OVER THE BEAUTIFUL NIGHTSCAPE OF OMOTE-SANDO...

...HAVE TEARS LEFT TO CRY.
I DON'T EVEN ...
OH, WOW...
...EVERYTHING JUST FEELS SO...
BUT NOW...
DUMPED, I'D CRY UNTIL THE SUN CAME UP.
SAD OR FRUSTRATED...
I WAS YOUNGER ...
... HOLLOW.
DRY
Asahi

WHIMP
SAVE ME, SPECIAL "MATURE LOVE" EDITION!!
IF I LET THIS EMPTINESS ENVELOP ME, I'M DONE FOR!!
THIS IS TER-RIBLE ...
THIS IS... REALLY BAD...
GRAB
...
THIS IS BAD ...
KEY
KEY. MODEL. EJIMA, TAKA... ACTOR
俳優
江島タ
今、一番気になる男たち
THE MEN WE'RE MOST INTERESTED IN NOW

KEY
キー・モデル
KEY.
MODEL.
今、一番気になる男たち
THE MEN WE'RE MOST INTERESTED IN NOW
THE INVENTOR OF THE NAME "WHAT-IF GIRLS" ...
...SMILED AS IF LOOKING DOWN ON ME FROM THE PAGES OF THE MAGAZINE.

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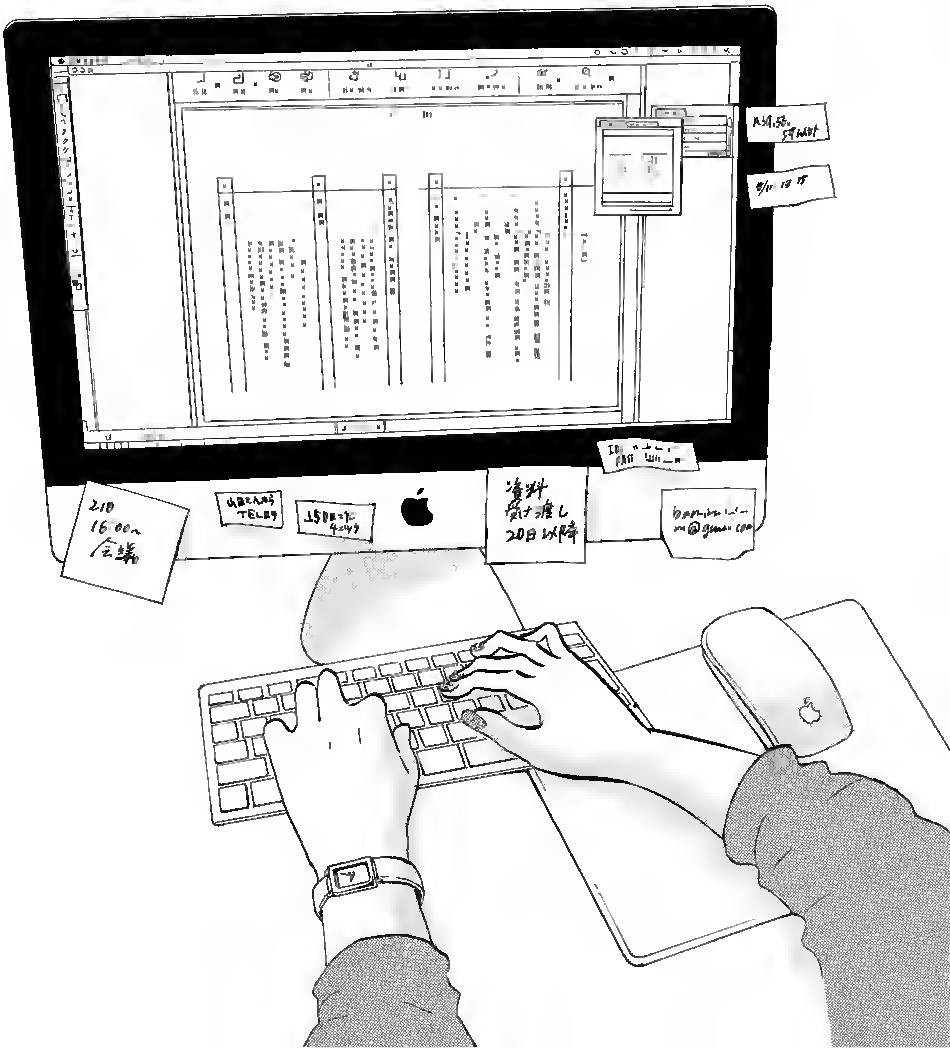
ACT 3

HONEY TOAST WOMAN

I'M THE HEROINE OF THIS LONG, LONG SCREENPLAY KNOWN AS LIFE.

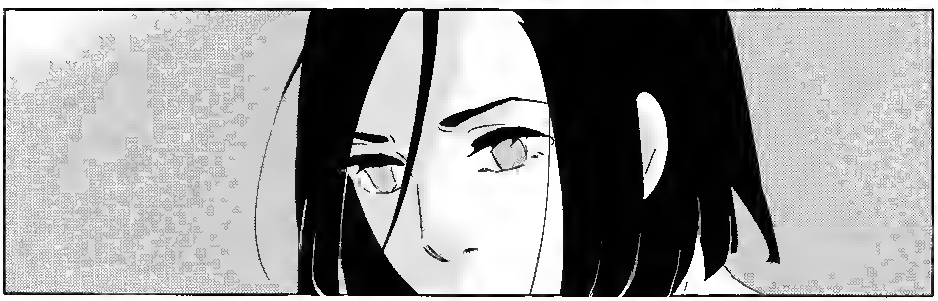
NO MATTER HOW OLD I GET, I'M STILL THE STAR.

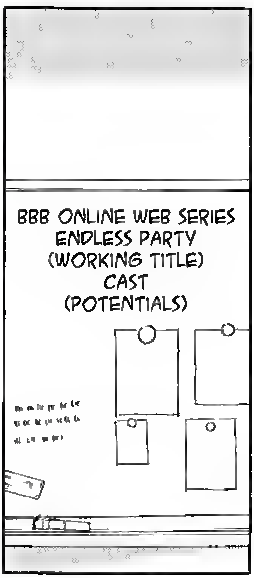


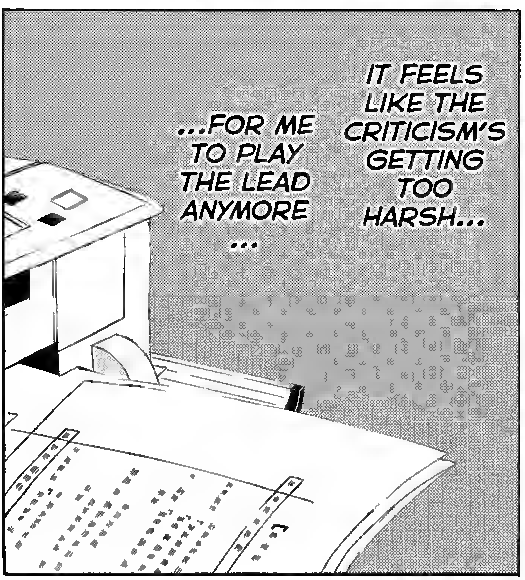
I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WAS A HAPPY THING.

SO WHY? I WONDER ...
SO MANY DEPRESSING THINGS HAVE HAPPENED LATELY...
SPECIAL
特集 大人の恋のはじめかた
HOW TO BEGIN A MATURE ROMANCE
パラ… FLIP
THE MEN WE'RE
YOU WHAT-IF WOMAN.

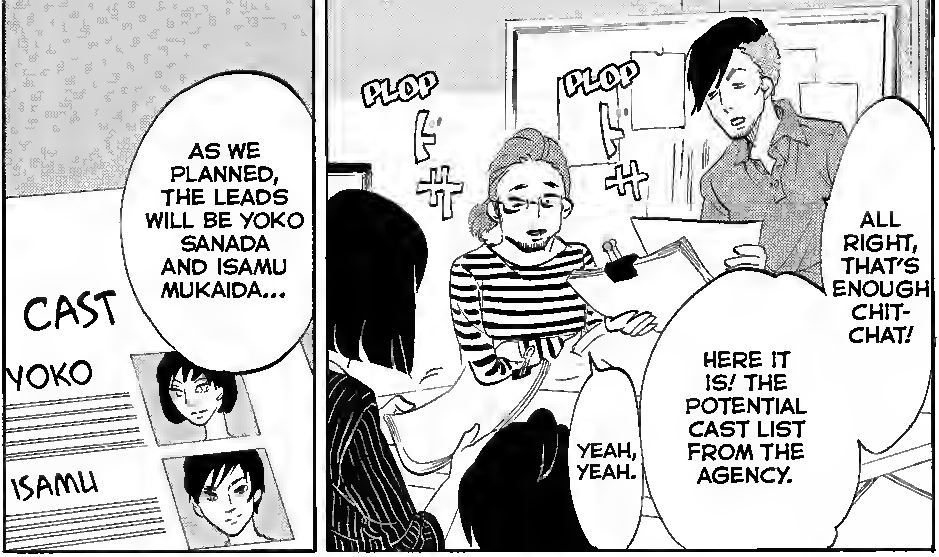
YOU'RE NOT GIRLS ANYMORE, ARE YOU?
LADIES!!!!
YOU KNOW MEN WILL ONLY HELP YOU UP WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK WHEN YOU'RE UNDER 25, RIGHT?

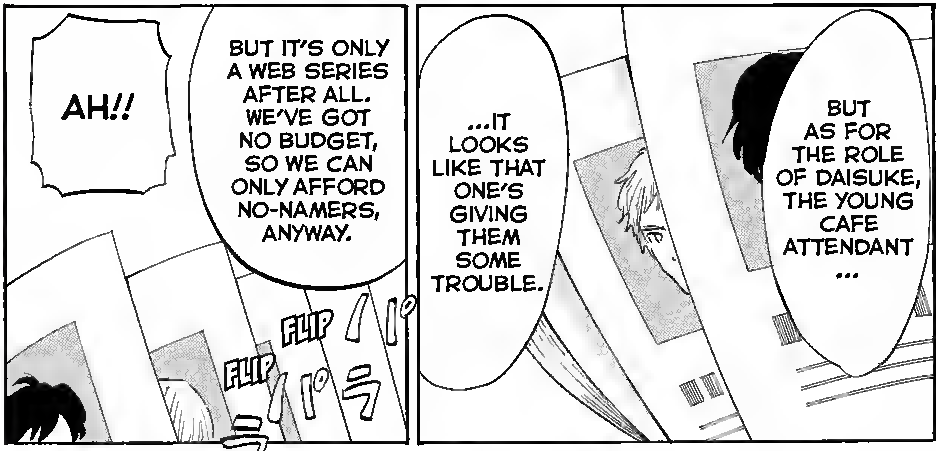


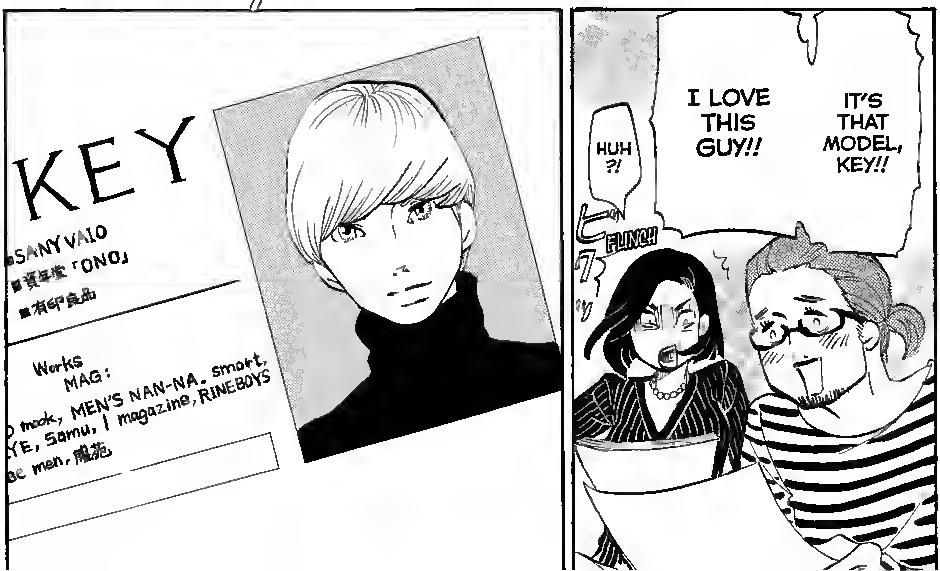

BBB ONLINE WEB SERIES
ENDLESS PARTY
(WORKING TITLE)
CAST
(POTENTIALS)


...FOR ME TO PLAY THE LEAD ANYMORE ...
IT FEELS LIKE THE CRITICISM'S GETTING TOO HARSH...

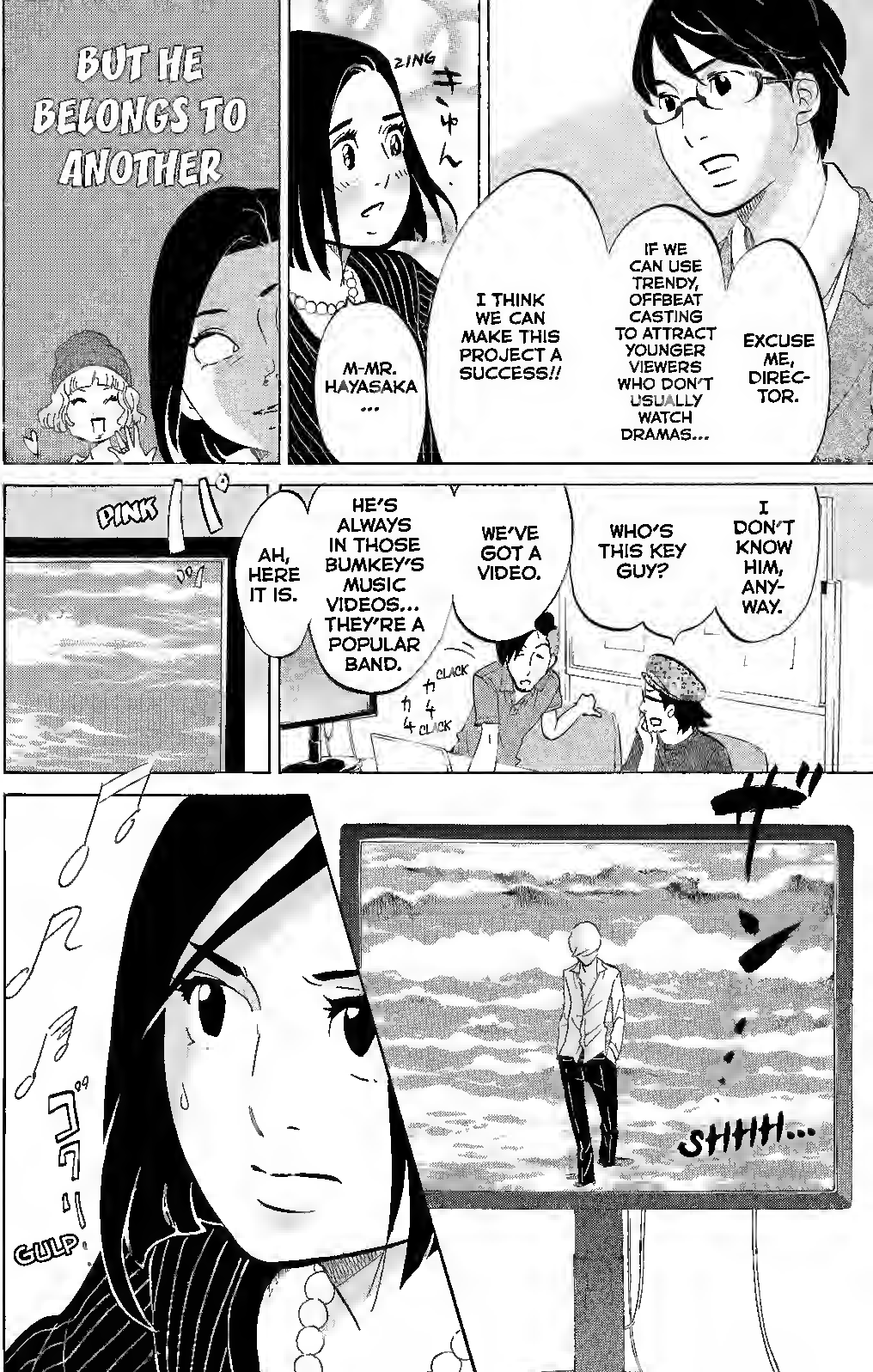
I JUST ...
I'M SORRY! I'M NOT SLEEPY!
SHE'S PROBABLY SLEEPY BECAUSE SHE WAS UP ALL NIGHT POUNDING OUT THIS SCRIPT.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? CAN'T YOU PAY ATTEN-TION?
ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?!
RINKO!!
RINKO!
GASP
WELL... UM...
NO ...
HUH?!
YOU'VE GOT A BOYFRIEND NOW, RINKO?
HA HA...
MAYBE ...
A MAN?
IS IT A MAN?
WHAT?
HUH?!
HEH!
MAMI, MAMI, MAMI! SHUT UP!
GRIT
BECAUSE MAMI REALLY CARES ABOUT YOU, RINKO...
SHE'S ALWAYS WONDERING IF THERE'S A NICE GUY OUT THERE FOR YOU.
THAT'S GREAT! MAMI AND I WERE WORRIED ABOUT THAT VERY THING!


AS WE PLANNED, THE LEADS WILL BE YOKO SANADA AND ISAMU MUKAIDA...
CAST
YOKO
ISAMU
PLOP
PLOP
ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH CHIT-CHAT!
HERE IT IS! THE POTENTIAL CAST LIST FROM THE AGENCY.
YEAH, YEAH.


AH!!
BUT IT'S ONLY A WEB SERIES AFTER ALL. WE'VE GOT NO BUDGET, SO WE CAN ONLY AFFORD NO-NAMERS, ANYWAY.
FLIP
FLIP
...IT LOOKS LIKE THAT ONE'S GIVING THEM SOME TROUBLE.
BUT AS FOR THE ROLE OF DAISUKE, THE YOUNG CAFE ATTENDANT ...


KEY
SANY VAIO
Works
MAG:
mook, MEN'S NAN-NA, smart,
YE, samu, I magazine, RINEBOYS
Be man, 雑誌
HUH ?!
I LOVE THIS GUY!!
IT'S THAT MODEL, KEY!!
FUN!!

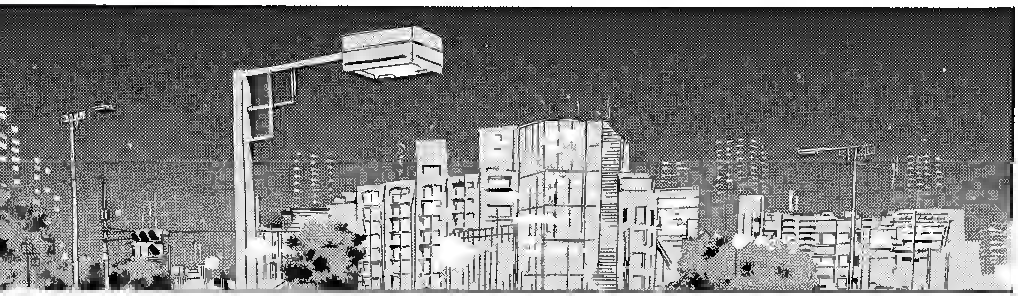
OH! HE'S BEEN GETTING BIG LATELY, HASN'T HE?
DO YOU KNOW HIM, RINKO?
YEAH ...
I KNOW HIM ...
OH!
EVEN THE THIRTY-SOMETHINGS KNOW HIM.
YEAH, I'M THIRTY-SOMETHING!
33 is still thirty-something!!
BOOM
IN FACT!! I CAN TELL YOU THIS GUY'S NO GOOD!!
ISN'T HE A MODEL?! WE CAN'T EXPECT A MODEL TO ACT!!
WHAM
OH, WHO CARES? IT'S THE INTERNET.
GETTING AWAY WITH CASTING CHOICES THAT WON'T FLY ON TV IS ONE OF OUR SELLING POINTS.
IT DOESN'T MATTER IF HE CAN'T ACT.
RIGHT ...
DIRECTOR?
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO WE GET FOR THIS CRAP...
AT LEAST TRY TO LOOK LIKE YOU'RE EXCITED, DIRECTOR!!
ボー
DAZED
IF IT GETS ENOUGH BUZZ, THEY'LL RELEASE A WEB SERIES ON DVD. WE MIGHT EVEN GET BROADCAST OVER THE—
NOT A CHANCE.
WEB SERIES ARE ALREADY IN DECLINE. THOSE BIG HITS ON COMMERCIAL TV AND MORNING DRAMAS ARE DRAWING ALL THE VIEWERS BACK TO TELEVISION!
DON'T YOU SEE THAT THIS IS OUR CHANCE?


BUT HE BELONGS TO ANOTHER
ZING
キュン
M-MR. HAYASAKA ...
I THINK WE CAN MAKE THIS PROJECT A SUCCESS!!
IF WE CAN USE TRENDY, OFFBEAT CASTING TO ATTRACT YOUNGER VIEWERS WHO DON'T USUALLY WATCH DRAMAS...
EXCUSE ME, DIREC-TOR.
PINK
AH, HERE IT IS.
HE'S ALWAYS IN THOSE BUMKEY'S MUSIC VIDEOS... THEY'RE A POPULAR BAND.
CLACK
CLACK
WE'VE GOT A VIDEO.
WHO'S THIS KEY GUY?
I DON'T KNOW HIM, ANY-WAY.
GULP
SHHH...

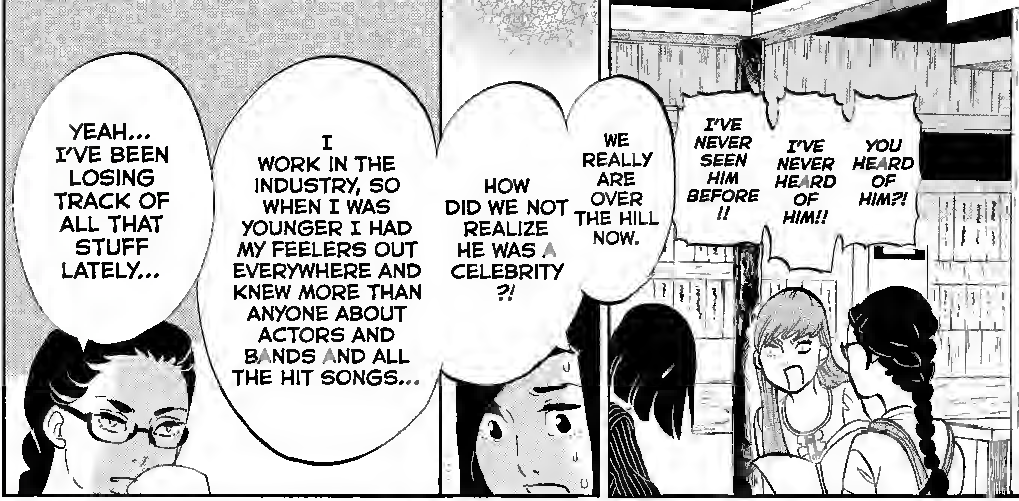
SHHH...

BA-DUMP
RUSTLE
...BUT HE LOOKS PRETTY MASCU-LINE IN MOTION...
IN THE PICTURE, I THOUGHT HE HAD A GIRLY FACE...
THEN LET'S GO WITH HIM.
PER-FECT.
THE FEMALE LEAD IS 5'7", SO I WAS THINKING WE NEEDED A TALL BOY.
6'1".
HOW TALL IS HE?
HE REALLY IS A HOTTIE!
OH, HE'S AMAZING!!

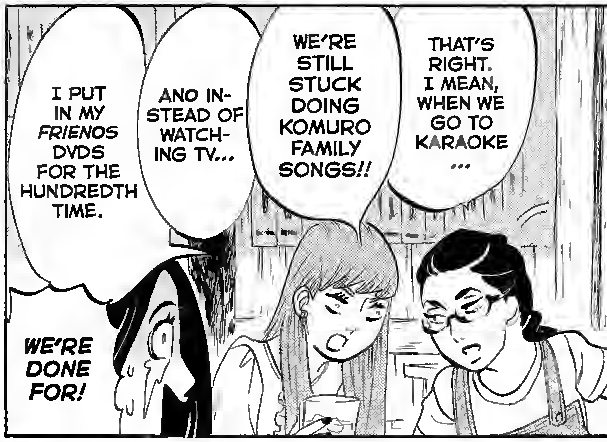
WAIT, THIS GUY'S JUST ...
WELL... HE'S NOT WHAT I PICTURED IN MY HEAD!
IN THE SCRIPT, I IMAGINED HIM AS MORE THE NAIVE, AVERAGE TYPE...
I LIKE HIM.
SET UP A MEETING.



YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
GAH!
NONBEE
酒処 呑んべえ
PUB

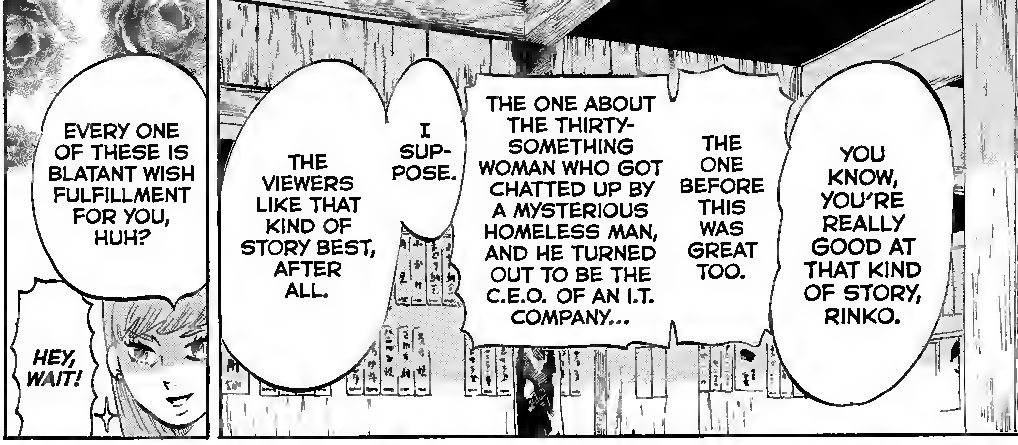

YEAH... I'VE BEEN LOSING TRACK OF ALL THAT STUFF LATELY...
I WORK IN THE INDUSTRY, SO WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I HAD MY FEELERS OUT EVERYWHERE AND KNEW MORE THAN ANYONE ABOUT ACTORS AND BANDS AND ALL THE HIT SONGS...
HOW DID WE NOT REALIZE HE WAS A CELEBRITY ?!
WE REALLY ARE OVER THE HILL NOW.
I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE !!
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM!!
YOU HEARD OF HIM?!

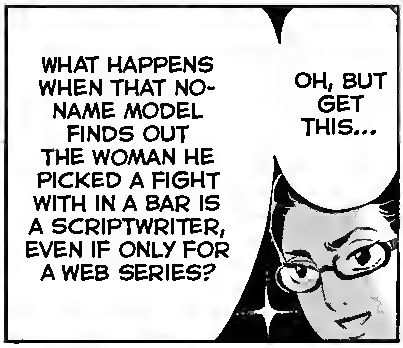
IT'S NO USE! NOW THEY'RE GETTING WORKED UP ABOUT FOREIGN TV SHOWS AGAIN!
NO, ALL I'VE BEEN WATCHING LATELY IS GLEE.
YOU KNOW, GOSSIP GIRL?
SAY, ARE YOU WATCHING THAT ONE?

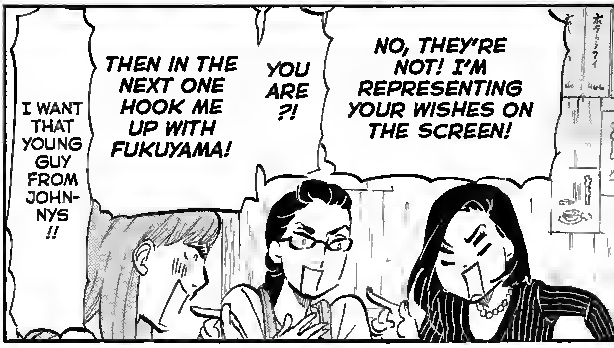

I PUT IN MY FRIENDS DVDS FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME.
AND INSTEAD OF WATCHING TV...
WE'RE STILL STUCK DOING KOMURO FAMILY SONGS!!
THAT'S RIGHT. I MEAN, WHEN WE GO TO KARAOKE ...
WE'RE DONE FOR!

Ohhh, welcome!
HEY, POPS! LONG TIME NO SEE!
SLUMP
GASP
THUNK
AND IF WE START THIS AGAIN, HE'S GOING TO—

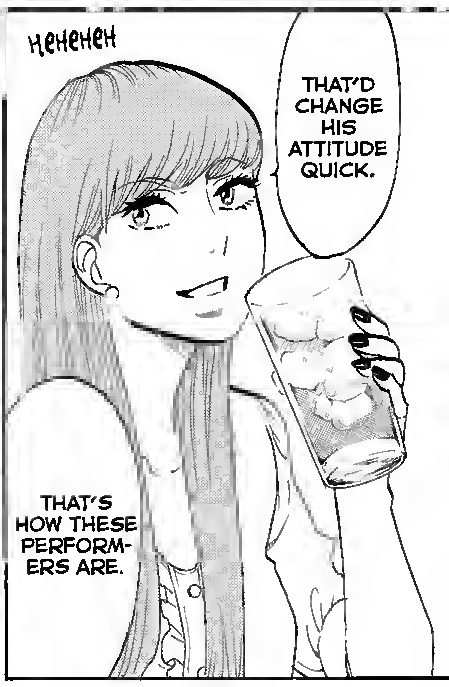
I THOUGHT HE WAS IN SOME SECOND-RATE BAND OR SOME-THING.
I'M PRETTY SURE HE'S BEEN COMING HERE FOR A WHILE.
HEY, WHY'S A FASHION MODEL COMING TO THIS LOWBROW PUB IN THE FIRST PLACE?
AM I TURNING INTO A GROUPIE JUST BECAUSE I FOUNO OUT HE'S FAMOUS?!
WAIT, WHAT AM I DISAP-POINTED FOR?!
THONK コ ス
I'D RATHER BAN YOU THREE!!
BAN THAT JERK FROM THE PREMISES !!
POPS !!
ピ SNAP
DAMN IT... THAT WANNA-BE STAR IS RUINING OUR SPOT...
THAT'S A SUPER HUGE PART!
THE LEAD IS A THIRTY-SOMETHING WOMAN WHO'S TORN BETWEEN A RICH, OLDER MAN AND A YOUNG CAFE CLERK. AND HE'S PLAYING THE CLERK ...
AND, HEY, THAT SHOW SOUNDS PRETTY GOOD!
WELL, ACTUAL-LY... IT'S THE 3RD BIG-GEST PART ...
EVEN IF HE DOES, ISN'T IT JUST A BIT PART, ANYWAY?
IS HE REALLY GOING TO APPEAR IN YOUR SHOW?
SO?!

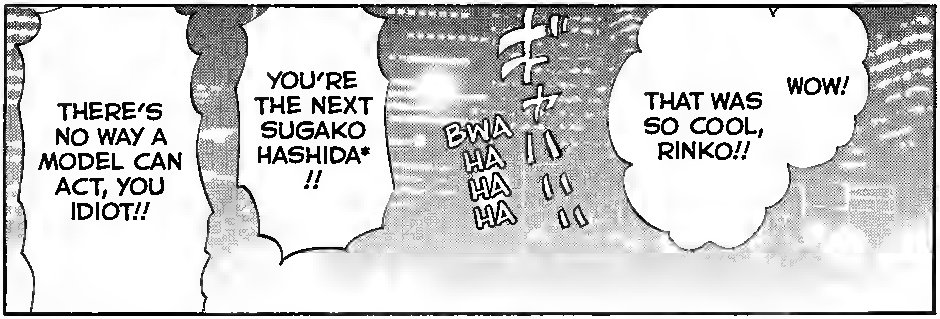

EVERY ONE OF THESE IS BLATANT WISH FULFILLMENT FOR YOU, HUH?
HEY, WAIT!
THE VIEWERS LIKE THAT KIND OF STORY BEST, AFTER ALL.
I SUP-POSE.
THE ONE ABOUT THE THIRTY-SOMETHING WOMAN WHO GOT CHATTED UP BY A MYSTERIOUS HOMELESS MAN, AND HE TURNED OUT TO BE THE C.E.O. OF AN I.T. COMPANY...
THE ONE BEFORE THIS WAS GREAT TOO.
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT THAT KIND OF STORY, RINKO.


WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THAT NO-NAME MODEL FINDS OUT THE WOMAN HE PICKED A FIGHT WITH IN A BAR IS A SCRIPTWRITER, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A WEB SERIES?
OH, BUT GET THIS...


I WANT THAT YOUNG GUY FROM JOHN-NYS !!
THEN IN THE NEXT ONE HOOK ME UP WITH FUKUYAMA!
YOU ARE ?!
NO, THEY'RE NOT! I'M REPRESENTING YOUR WISHES ON THE SCREEN!

I DO HAVE SOME SAY OVER THE CASTING.
WHEN HE COMES BEGGING, I'M GONNA REALLY TELL HIM OFF.
SOME-THING LIKE THAT.

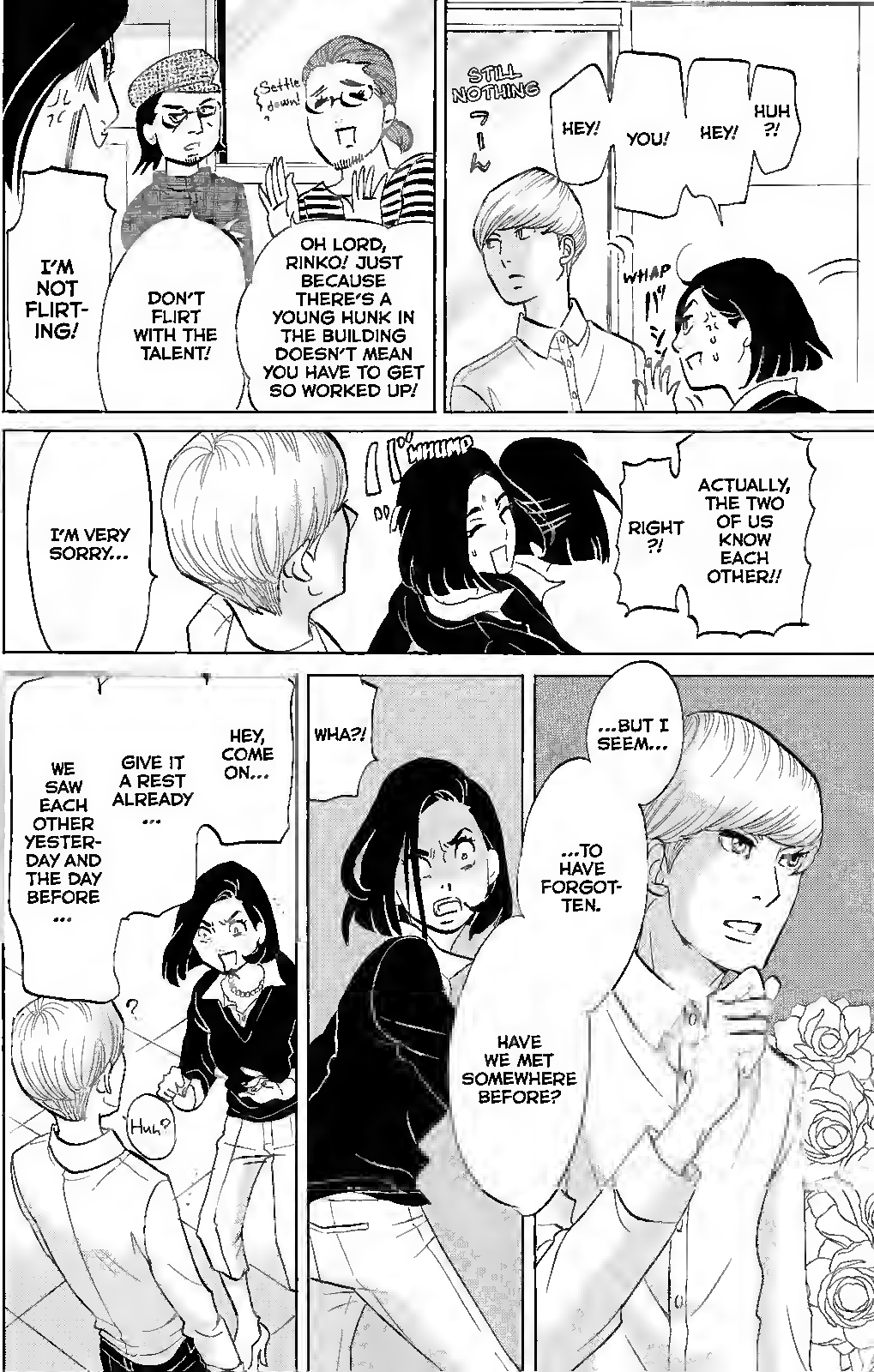

Hehehen
THAT'D CHANGE HIS ATTITUDE QUICK.
THAT'S HOW THESE PERFORM-ERS ARE.



*AN AWARO-WINNING SCRIPTWRITER ANO AS OF 2015 THE FIRST SCRIPTWRITER TO BE DESIGNATED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT AS A "PERSON OF CULTURAL MERIT."

HELLO.
I'M KEY...
A MODEL WITH HER AGENCY.
BLUSH
EEK!
EEK!
...
HE'S SO SLENDER!
LOOK AT HOW DELICATE HIS FACE IS!
I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO EVERYONE.
LET'S SEE... THIS IS OUR ASSISTANT PRODUCER MR. HAYASAKA...
NICE TO MEET YOU!!
HEHEH...
PREPARE FOR THE SURPRISE OF YOUR LIFE, YOU BASTARD...

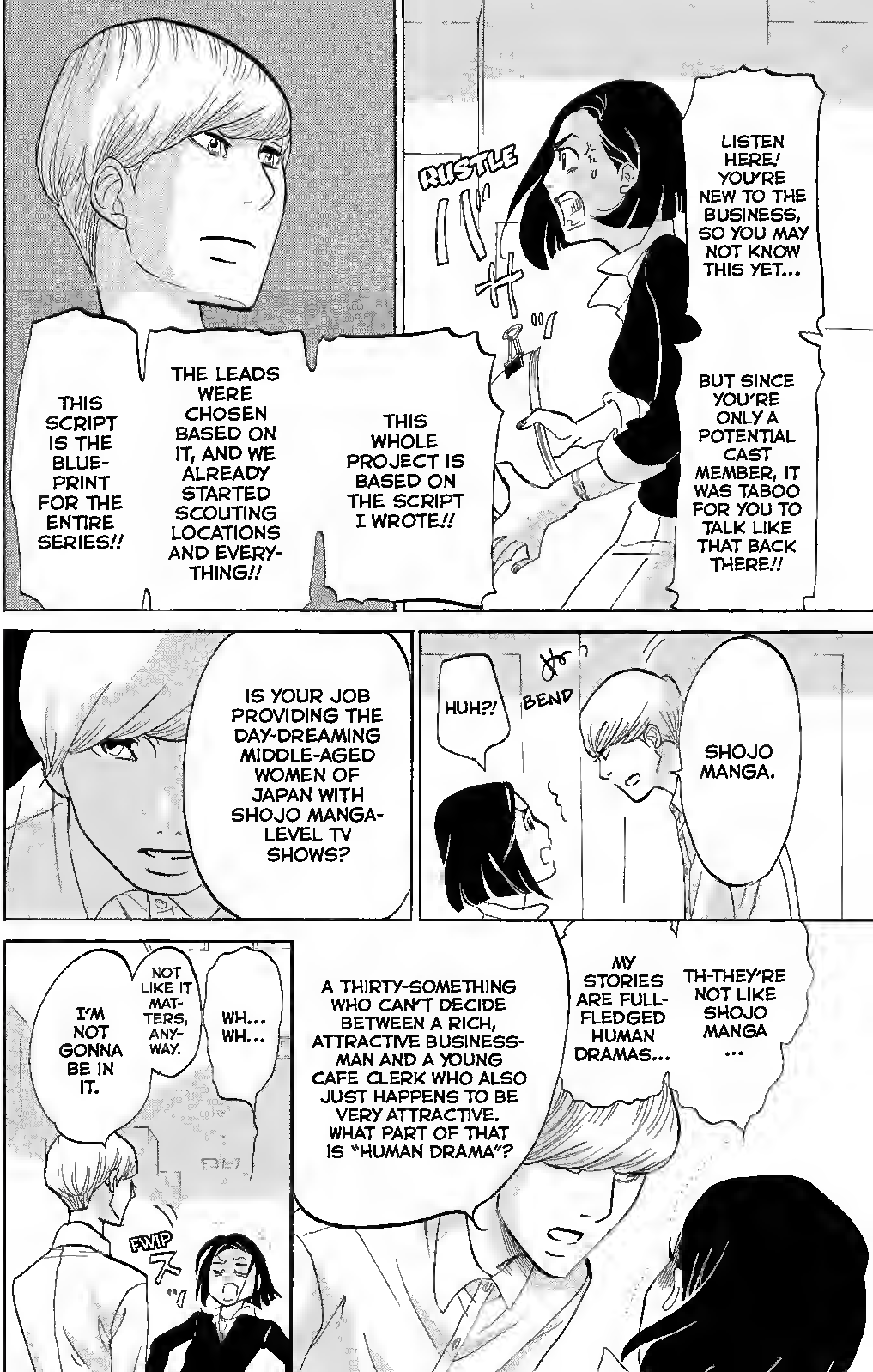
FWIP
AND THIS IS WOMAN WHO WROTE THE SCRIPT...
FWISH
HEH HEH HEH
AND GET READY TO BEG MY FORGIVENESS FOR BEING SUCH AN ASSHOLE!!
NO
HELLO.
NICE TO MEET YOU!!
REACTION
HUH!?!
HELLO.
RINKO KAMATA.


Settle down!
I'M NOT FLIRTING!
DON'T FLIRT WITH THE TALENT!
OH LORD, RINKO! JUST BECAUSE THERE'S A YOUNG HUNK IN THE BUILDING DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO GET SO WORKED UP!
STILL NOTHING
HEY!
YOU!
HEY!
HUH ?!
WHAP
I'M VERY SORRY...
UMUMP
RIGHT ?!
ACTUALLY, THE TWO OF US KNOW EACH OTHER!!
HEY, COME ON...
GIVE IT A REST ALREADY ...
WE SAW EACH OTHER YESTERDAY AND THE DAY BEFORE ...
Huh?
WHA?!
...BUT I SEEM...
...TO HAVE FORGOTTEN.
HAVE WE MET SOMEWHERE BEFORE?

Don't you sigh at me!!
WHAT ARE YOU SIGHING ABOUT?!
WHAT WAS THAT SIGH?!
NOW I UNDERSTAND.
SIGH...
SWEAT
SWEAT
RARGH!
WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH THIS GUY?!
OH, NONBEE IS THE PUB ME AND MY FRIENDS ALWAYS GO TO...
NO, REALLY! THIS GUY'S ALWAYS TRYING TO PICK A FIGHT WITH US AT NONBEE!
I DON'T REALLY WANT TO BE AN ACTOR, ANYWAY.
NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
WHOA...
KEY?!
SO THE LOUDMOUTH FROM THE BAR IS THE VERY SAME PERSON WHO WROTE THAT BORING SCRIPT.
SMILE
I MEAN, WHY WOULD TWO DIFFERENT MEN BE SO SMITTEN WITH THIS MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN?
WHEN I READ THIS SCRIPT, EVERYTHING WAS JUST SO CONVENIENT...
BUT...
BBB Web Series
Endless Party (Working Title)
HUH?!

"THIS STORY IS COMPLETELY LACKING IN REALISM."
THAT'S WHAT I KEPT THINKING TO MYSELF.
BUT NOW I GET IT.
IF SHE'S THE ONE WRITING IT, I GUESS IT WAS UNAVOIDABLE.
YEP.
WHA...
WHA...
STAGGER
PFFT
BWA HA HA HA! YOU REALLY SPEAK YOUR MIND, SON!!
I LIKE THIS GUY!! HE'S GOT GUTS!!
HAHAHAHA
HA
HUH?!
WAIT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GUTS...?

HEY, RINKO! YOU SHOULD WRITE THE PART FOR THIS GUY!
GRAB
REWRITE THE SCRIPT TO BE ABOUT A FORTY-SOMETHING WOMAN—
I'M AROUND THIRTY !!
—WITH HER HEAD IN THE CLOUDS, WHO KEEPS GETTING DRAGGED BACK DOWN TO EARTH BY A YOUNG, HOT GUY.
WHA ?!
HA HA HA HA
I'M SORRY, MA'AM, BUT KEY HAS TO BE IN AOYAMA AT TWO FOR A PHOTO SHOOT ...
WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE, PAL?! FIRST YOU INVADE MY BAR, AND NOW YOU COME INTO MY PLACE OF BUSINESS TO ATTACK ME TOO?!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
HEY!!
STOP RIGHT THERE, YOU!!
STOMP
WHAT IS IT?! WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?!
WHAT DID I DO TO YOU?!
DID I BULLY YOU IN A PAST LIFE?!
SORRY. I GUESS I JUST HAVE A TENDENCY TO SAY WHATEVER POPS INTO MY HEAD.
DON'T YOU SCREW WITH ME!!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE

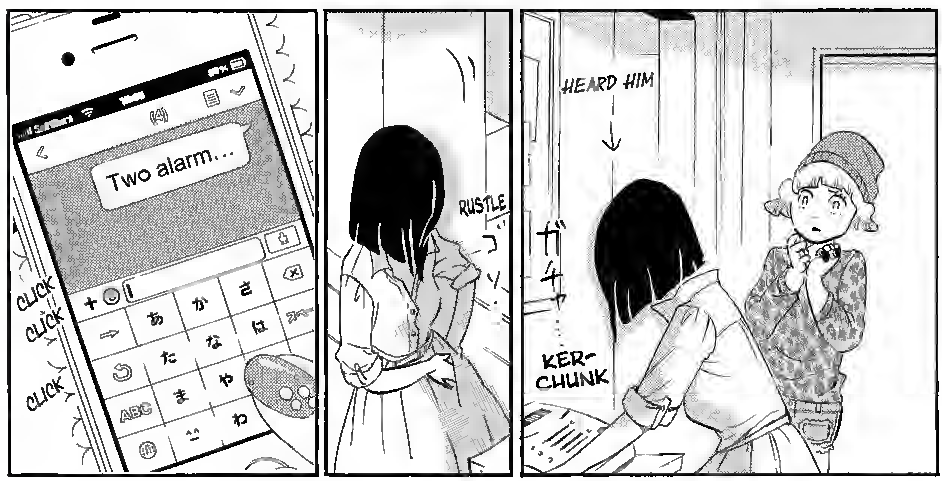

RUSTLE
LISTEN HERE! YOU'RE NEW TO THE BUSINESS, SO YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS YET...
BUT SINCE YOU'RE ONLY A POTENTIAL CAST MEMBER, IT WAS TABOO FOR YOU TO TALK LIKE THAT BACK THERE!!
THIS WHOLE PROJECT IS BASED ON THE SCRIPT I WROTE!!
THE LEADS WERE CHOSEN BASED ON IT, AND WE ALREADY STARTED SCOUTING LOCATIONS AND EVERY-THING!!
THIS SCRIPT IS THE BLUE-PRINT FOR THE ENTIRE SERIES!!
HUH?!
BEND
SHOJO MANGA.
IS YOUR JOB PROVIDING THE DAY-DREAMING MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN OF JAPAN WITH SHOJO MANGA-LEVEL TV SHOWS?
TH-THEY'RE NOT LIKE SHOJO MANGA ...
MY STORIES ARE FULL-FLEDGED HUMAN DRAMAS...
A THIRTY-SOMETHING WHO CAN'T DECIDE BETWEEN A RICH, ATTRACTIVE BUSINESS-MAN AND A YOUNG CAFE CLERK WHO ALSO JUST HAPPENS TO BE VERY ATTRACTIVE. WHAT PART OF THAT IS "HUMAN DRAMA"?
WH... WH...
NOT LIKE IT MAT-TERS, ANY-WAY.
I'M NOT GONNA BE IN IT.
FWIP

I ONLY CAME BECAUSE THE AGENCY TOLD ME TO.
I NEVER WANTED TO BE AN ACTOR IN THE FIRST PLACE.
AND EVEN IF I WAS FORCED TO ACT IN SOME-THING...
...IT SURE AS HELL WOULDN'T BE THIS.
W-
WHY NOT?!
BECAUSE IT SUCKS.
CAW

IS IT TRUE KEY WAS BEING CONSIDERED FOR A PART, BUT THE DEAL WENT UNDER? I HEARD FROM MR. HAYASAKA!
RINKO!
OLYMPIA
オリンピア
CHEER UP! THESE THINGS HAPPEN!
OH, I KNOW!
NOTHING IS GOING RIGHT...
IT'S NO USE ...
It sounds like the producer's really mad!!
THEY DID!!
THEY PROBABLY BLAMED IT ON ME, DIDN'T THEY?
...
HELLO, YOU'VE REACHED THE OFFICE OF RINKO KAMATA!
OH!
MR. HAYASAKA!
THE PHONE!
OH!
BRRRRING
HEY!
GRR!
NO PRIVATE CALLS ON COMPANY—
KER-CHUNK
We took a ceramics class!
YOU CAN HAVE THIS MUG I MADE WITH MR. HAYASAKA IN HAKONE !!
HERE!!
I DON'T WANT IT!
POP

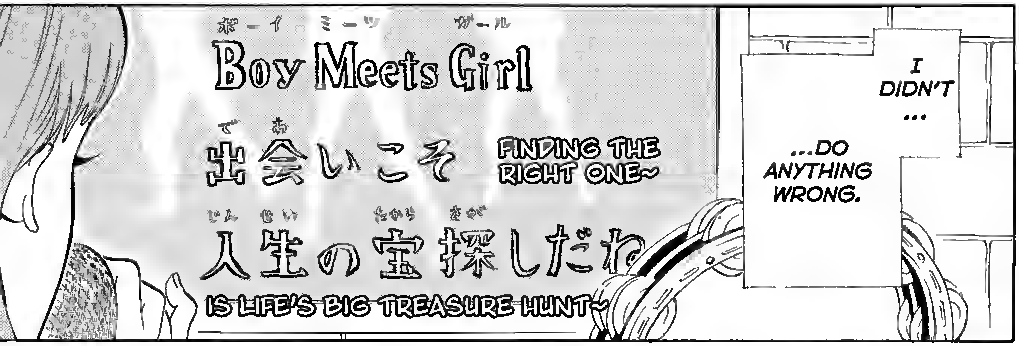
I'm very sorry about this, Rinko...
HUH?
I know this is sudden, but...
...the producer and director just decided that...
HELLO? MR. HAYASAKA?
IT'S FOR ME?
HUH?
I'LL PUT HER ON!
OH! YES!
HUH?!

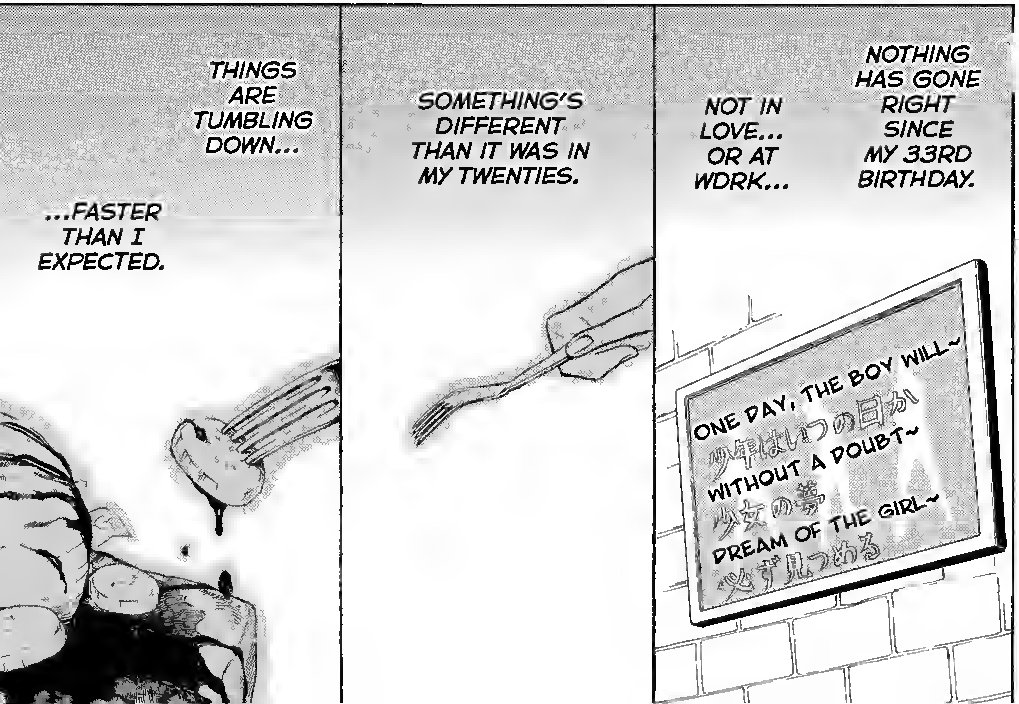
TELL HER WE'RE ALREADY IN A MEETING WITH THE NEW WRITER!!
SPIT IT OUT, MAN!!
...ANOTHER WRITER ON THIS PROJECT.
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE... MAYBE... THEY'LL BE GOING WITH...


Two alarm...
CLICK CLICK CLICK
RUSTLE
HEARD HIM
KER-CHUNK

CAN YOU CELEBRATE?!
KARAOKE PASELA
カラオケ パセラ
CAN YOU KISS ME TONIGHT?!
JINGLE
JANGLE
WE WILL LOVE A LO– NG LONG TIME!
WE'RE ALL ALONE– TONIGHT
I CAN'T WAIT– CAN YOU–?
BUT I'LL BE ALONE WHEN I GO HOME!
BWA HA HA HA HA!
MWEHOOO

WHY...?
Yay! The honey toast is here!
WHO ORDERED THE HONEY TOAST?
KER-CHUNK
RINKO, SING THAT RAP BY MARK!
I'M DOING GLOBE!
I'M SINGING TRF NEXT.
BEEP ピ
BEEP ピ
BEEP ピ
OH, I'LL SING IT ALL RIGHT!

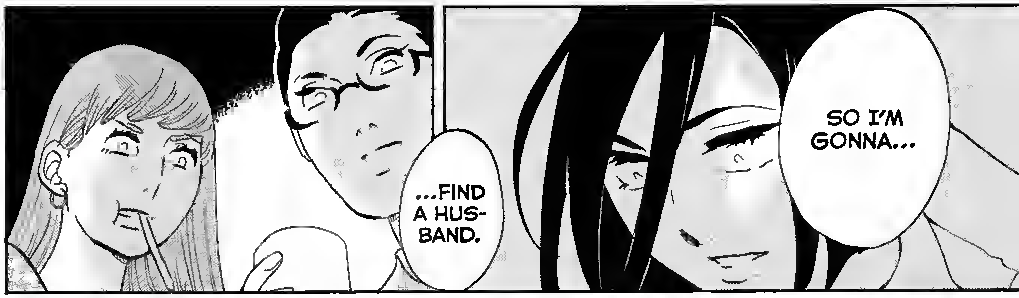

ボーイ ミーツ ガール
Boy Meets Girl
出会いこそ
FINDING THE RIGHT ONE~
人生の宝探しだね
IS LIFE'S BIG TREASURE HUNT~
I DIDN'T ...
...DO ANYTHING WRONG.


THINGS ARE TUMBLING DOWN...
...FASTER THAN I EXPECTED.
SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT THAN IT WAS IN MY TWENTIES.
NOT IN LOVE... OR AT WORK...
NOTHING HAS GONE RIGHT SINCE MY 33RD BIRTHDAY.
ONE DAY, THE BOY WILL~
少年はいつの日か
WITHOUT A DOUBT~
少女の夢
DREAM OF THE GIRL~
必ず見つめる

ALMOST LIKE THIS HONEY TOAST.
What if, what if...you stopped spending your Friday night wolfing down honey toast with two more thirty-somethings while you sing '90s classics?!
Rinko!
GASP
PINK
I know you're depressed, but you can't afford to waste time at these girls' nights out. What if! What if!
You only get one shot at life. What if! What if!
YEAH... BUT...
WHEN I'M SINGING WITH THE GIRLS, I FORGET ALL THE PAIN...
FWAP

TRY MY HAND AT LOVE?! WITH WHO?!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WHEN YOUR CAREER DOESN'T WORK OUT, YOU TRIED YOUR HAND AT LOVE?!!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU COULD STILL MAKE IT IF YOU ACT FAST?!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU REALLY ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN PLAY THE LEAD ROLE IN YOUR LIFE?
SKREEEEEK
EEEEK!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THAT'S WHY YOU'RE STILL SINGLE!!
Courtship Arranged Marriage Party Opening Soon
MAY 4TH (SAT)
SUPER-SIZE
SUPER-SIZE FRIES ¥30
ASPARAGUS AND TARTAR SAUCE
UFO ¥50
KIM CHEESE
DICED STRAW
STRAWBERRY DOLCE PIZZA ¥600
That only happens to women in their twenties! What if! What if!
DON'T TELL ME YOU THOUGHT A MAN WAS JUST GONNA FALL IN YOUR LAP AS YOU WALKED DOWN THE STREET!! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
H-HUNTING GROUND ?!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU WENT OUT TO AN APPROPRIATE HUNTING GROUND, WHERE YOU PAID FOR THE PRIVILEGE ?!
GASP

I MAY NOT WORK IN THIS TOWN AGAIN...
KAORI... KOYUKI...
...A SIGN FROM ON HIGH...
A flyer?
WHAT IS THIS?
HMM?
GRAB


...FIND A HUSBAND.
SO I'M GONNA...

ALL RIGHT.
A RICH GUY ...
JUST IN CASE, I WANT TO GET MARRIED TO...
I'LL JOIN YOU, THEN.
SHAKE
SHAKE
DAD'S DIABETES HAS BEEN ACTING UP LATELY, SO HE'S GETTING PRETTY WEAK.
MY NAIL SALON ISN'T FEELING ANY EFFECT FROM ABENOMICS... WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY NEW CUSTOMERS...
HUH?!
AND THE RENT ON OMOTESANDO IS ROUGH ...
YOU'LL BE FINE! YOU'VE GOT TALENT!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, RINKO?!
...
ME TOO...

WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME...
LET'S GO...ALL THREE OF US...
KA-BOOM
F"
F"
K"
BOOM
ourtship Arranged Marriage Party Opening Soon
MAY 4TH (SAT)

BOOOOOOOM
KER-CHACK

ズガン
KA-BOOOOOM
RATTATATTATATTATATTA
ダダダダダダダダ
BRAT BRAT
BRAT
BRAT
ダダダダ
HMM?
ん？
...THAT'S WHAT THE LACK OF GOOD GUYS MAKES YOU WANNA DO, RIGHT?
HUH? THAT'S WEIRD...
THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A BIG PARTY FOR MARRIAGE SEEKERS ...
That age range
THEN ALL THE WOMEN MUST BE OLD AS H-

GLITTER キラキラキラ GLITTER ー！
ちゅどーん
KA-THOOOM
THEY'RE ALL YOUNG AND PRETTY CUTE!!
キャッ EEK!
EEK! キャッ

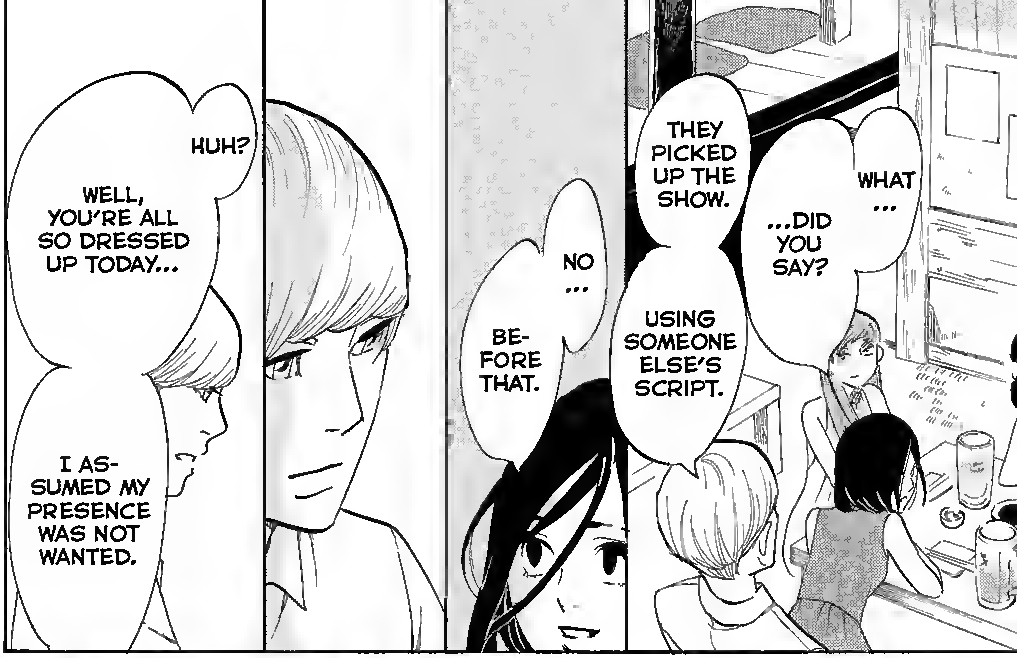
BAM BAM BAM BAM
BOOM
BRAT BRAT BRAT BRAT
WE MUST RETURN TO HQ AND COME UP WITH A NEW STRATEGY !!
WHAT-IF ARMY FIRST INFAN-TRY BAT-TALION!! FALL BACK !!
BOOM
PUB 酒処 呑んべえ NONBEE
HQ 大本営
MILT
LIVER

MAY-BE...
I SHOULD HAVE MARRIED THAT MUSICIAN IN COLLEGE ...
HE MAY HAVE BEEN BROKE, BUT HE WAS A LOT MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN ANYONE AT THAT PARTY TONIGHT...
LISTEN, WE'RE IN NO POSITION TO COMPLAIN ABOUT MEN'S LOOKS.
THE FACT THAT EVEN THOSE MEN HAVE YOUNG, CUTE GIRLS ANGLING FOR THEM IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM.
BECAUSE ALL THE GUYS THEIR AGE ARE EITHER UNDER- OR UNEM-PLOYED...
WHAT A TIME TO BE ALIVE ...
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE

WHICH MEANS... EVEN IF BY SOME MIRACLE YOU FOUND A GOOD MAN AMONG THEM...
...AND BY SOME OTHER MIRACLE YOU ACTUALLY LIKED HIM...
THOSE GIRLS WOULD BE YOUR RIVALS...
... RIGHT?
SLUMP

YOU KNOW ...
...IT'S START-ING...
...TO LOOK LIKE...
...WE MAY BE TOTALLY~
UNWANTED.

RIGHT?
THE SHOW'S BEEN PICKED UP.



NO MATTER HOW BAD YOUR PERSONALITY MAY BE, YOU'RE STILL EASY ON THE EYES ...
ACTUALLY, I'M GLAD TO SEE YOUR FACE TONIGHT.
NO ...
...
Let's drink with hottie!

I THOUGHT THAT NO MATTER HOW OLD I GOT, I'D ALWAYS BE THE STAR.

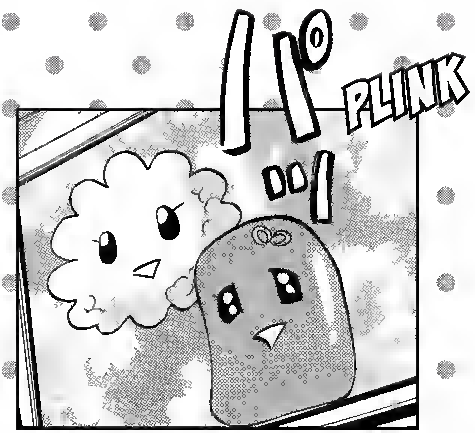
I ASSUMED THAT IN THE SCREENPLAY OF MY LIFE, I WOULD ALWAYS BE THE HEROINE.

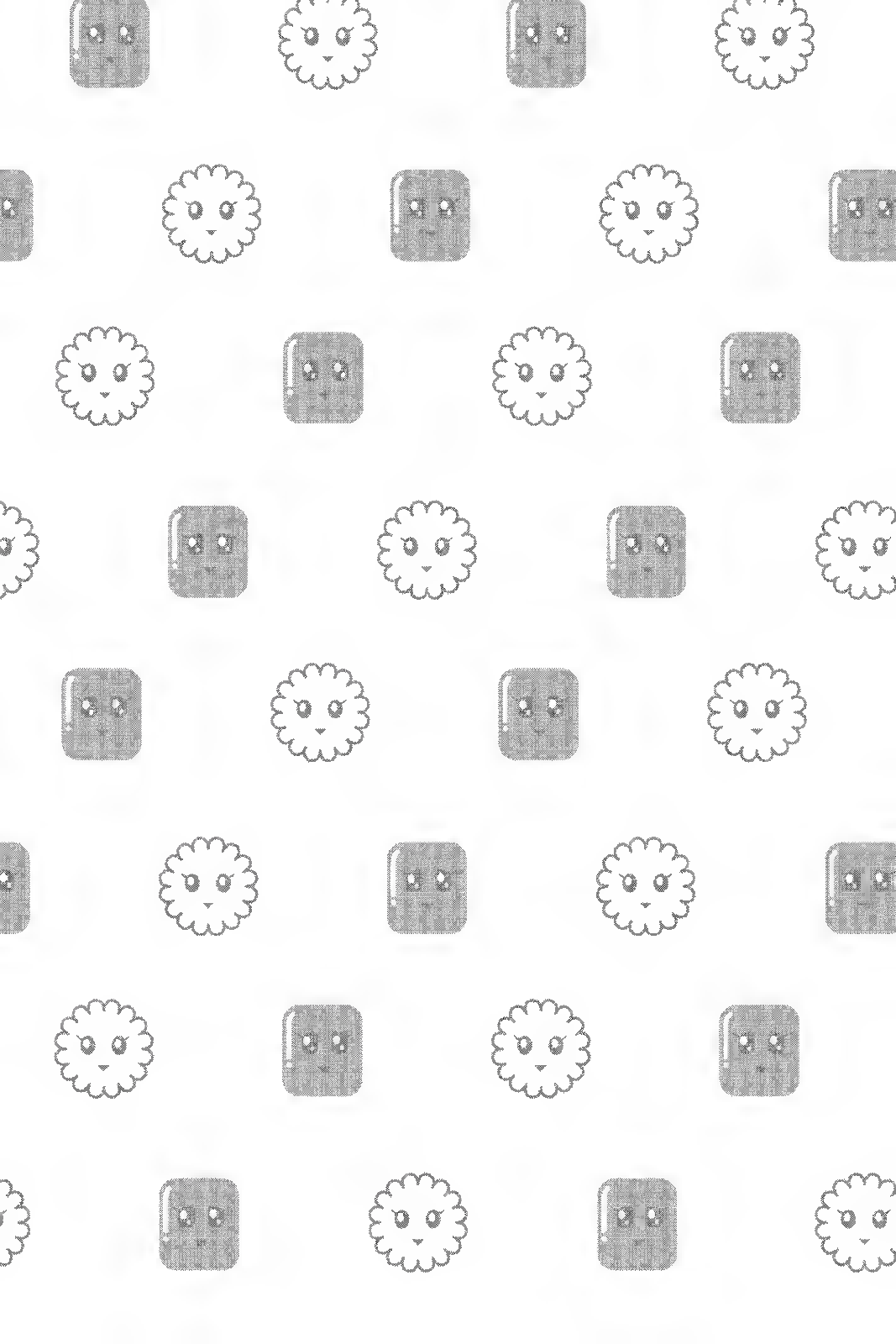
THAT IF I PUT MY HEART INTO IT, I COULD SUCCEED IN BOTH MY CAREER AND LOVE.

BUT I'M UNWANTED.
OR AT WORK.
I'M NOT WANTED IN LOVE.
OR THAT COURTSHIP PARTY.

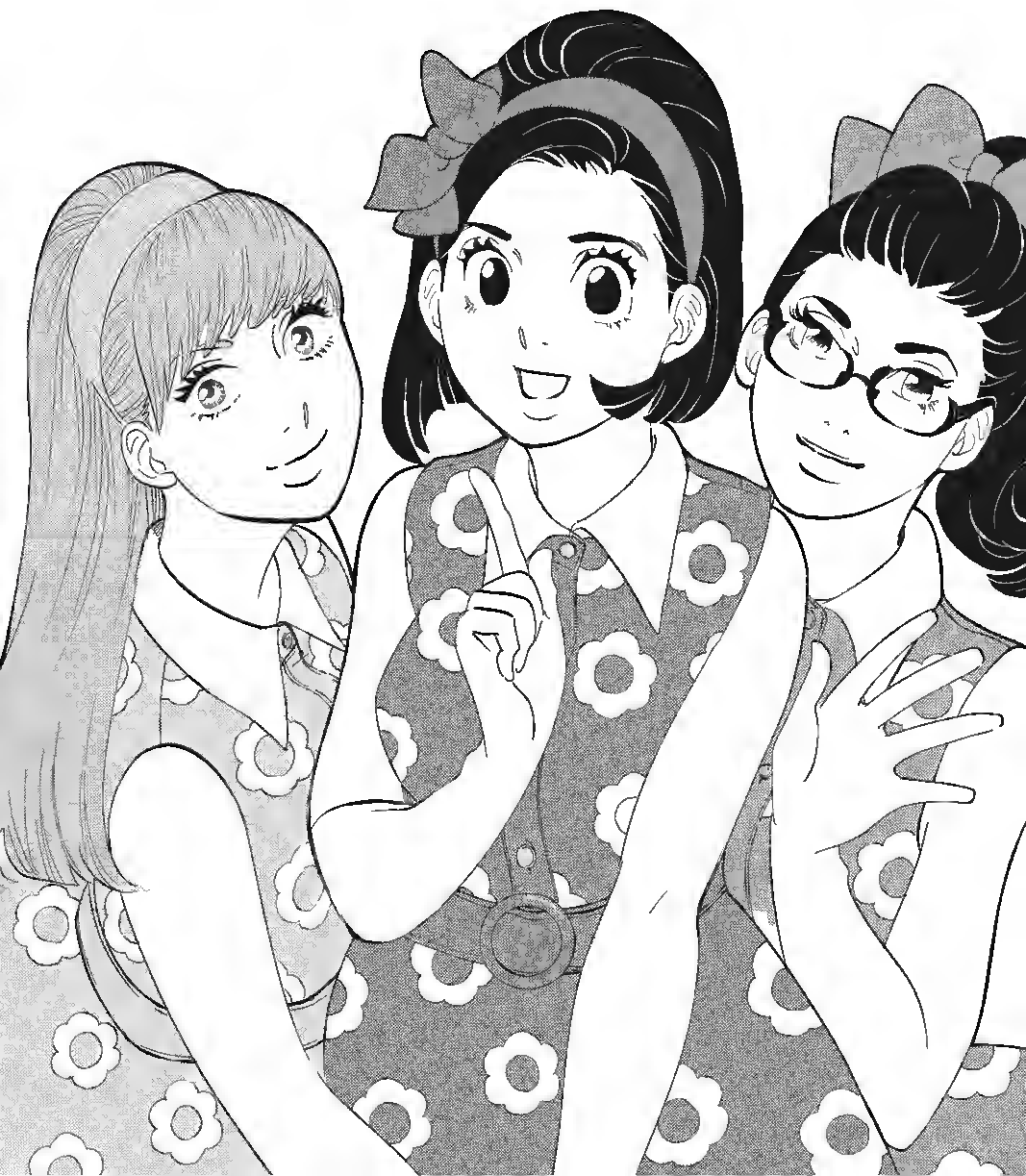
"I'M NOT WANTED HERE?"
"OH, I SEE."
"EXCUSE ME, THEN."

I CAN'T LET THINGS GO LIKE THAT, YOU BASTARDS!!


PLINK

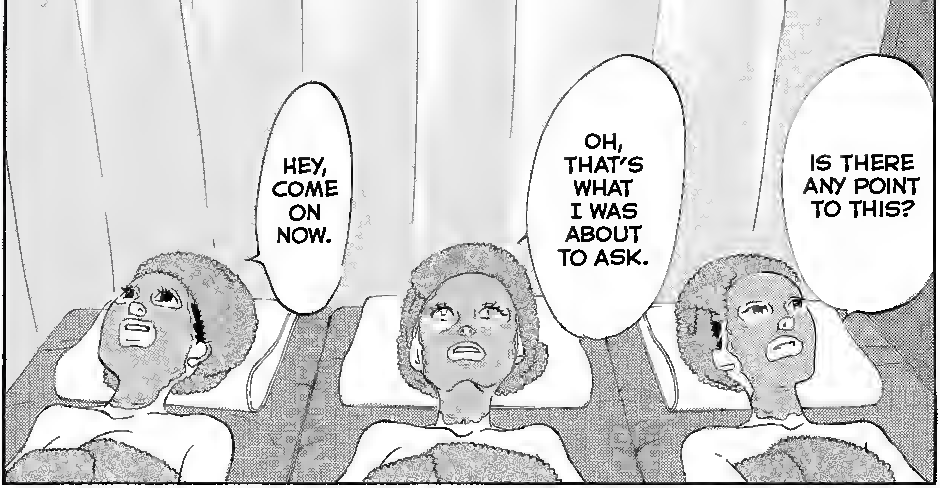


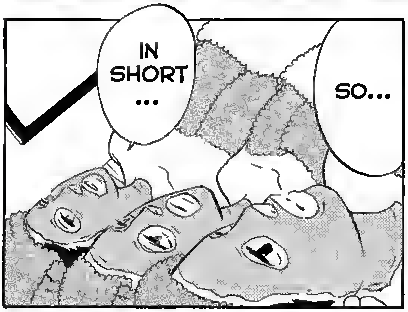
ACT 4 THE WOMAN WITH SAVINGS AND THE YOUNGER MAN

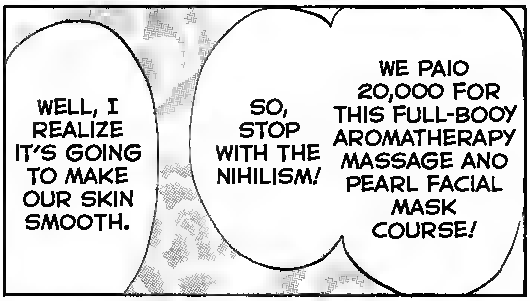


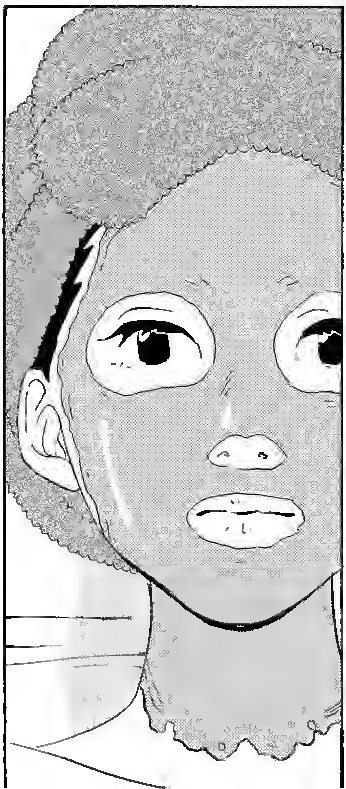
Esthetic Salon
Venus
GINZA
WHEN A THIRTY-SOMETHING WOMAN HAS NO LUCK IN LOVE OR WORK, HER BEST WEAPON...
ぐっちゃ
SQUICH
ぐっちゃ
SQUICH
SPLORCH
...IS HER BANK ACCOUNT.

ALL RIGHT. WE'LL LET THAT SIT FOR TEN MINUTES.
PLEASE WAIT WHILE THE MASK'S ACTIVE INGREDIENTS HAVE TIME TO ABSORB.
I KNOW WE CAME TO THIS SPA REELING FROM THE SHOCK OF THAT MATCHMAKING PARTY...
YES?
AND NOW I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU, AS A SCRIPTWRITER WHO SPECIALIZES IN ROMANCE.
...
RINKO ...
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S KIND OF HARD TO TALK LIKE THIS.


HEY, COME ON NOW.
OH, THAT'S WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO ASK.
IS THERE ANY POINT TO THIS?


IN SHORT ...
SO...

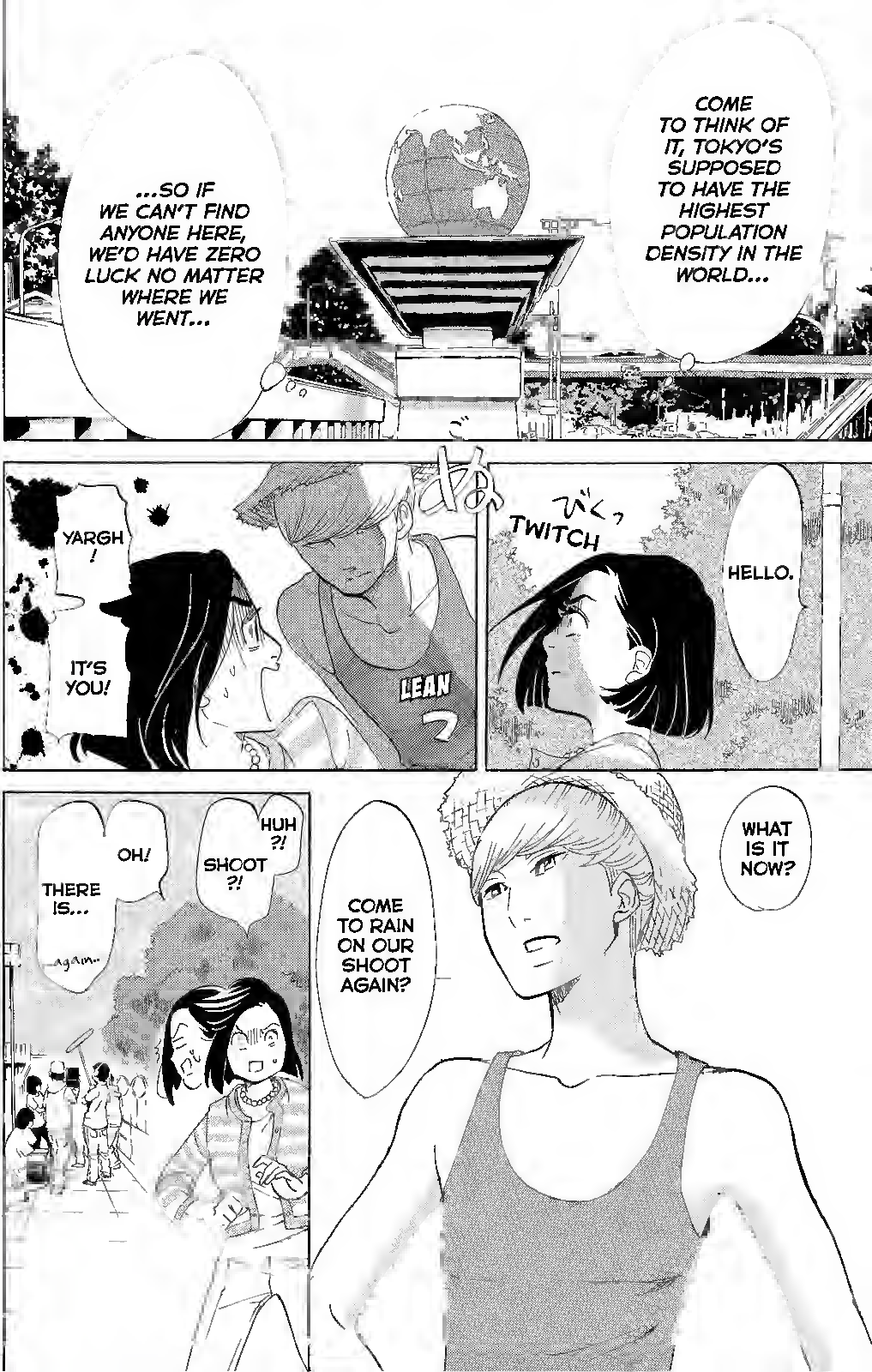

WELL, I REALIZE IT'S GOING TO MAKE OUR SKIN SMOOTH.
SO, STOP WITH THE NIHILISM!
WE PAID 20,000 FOR THIS FULL-BODY AROMATHERAPY MASSAGE AND PEARL FACIAL MASK COURSE!



YEAH, THAT.
...IS THE QUES-TION.
IF WE DO THIS, WILL IT HELP US GET MARRIED?

つるん SHINE
OF COURSE NOT.
OH, THAT GUY'S NOT AS HOT, BUT HE LOOKS LOADED.
OH. HE'S HOTTER.
OH. HE'S HOT.
...BUT WE STILL CAN'T FINO ANYONE FOR US.
THERE ARE SO MANY GOOO MEN STROLLING AROUNO TOWN...
I GUESS THERE ARE OECENT MEN ON OMOTESANDO AFTER ALL.

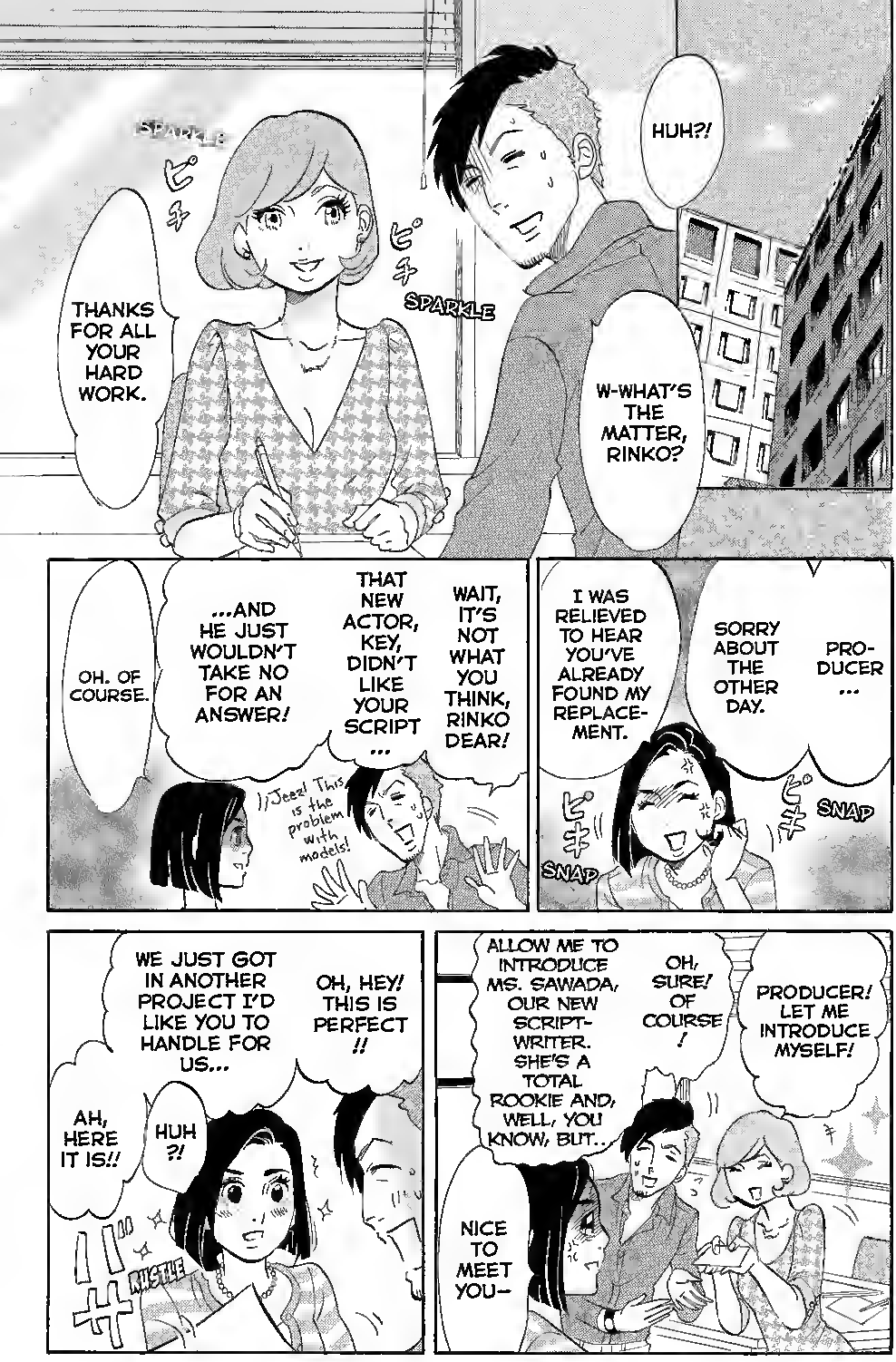
*FIVE RINGS BRIDGE

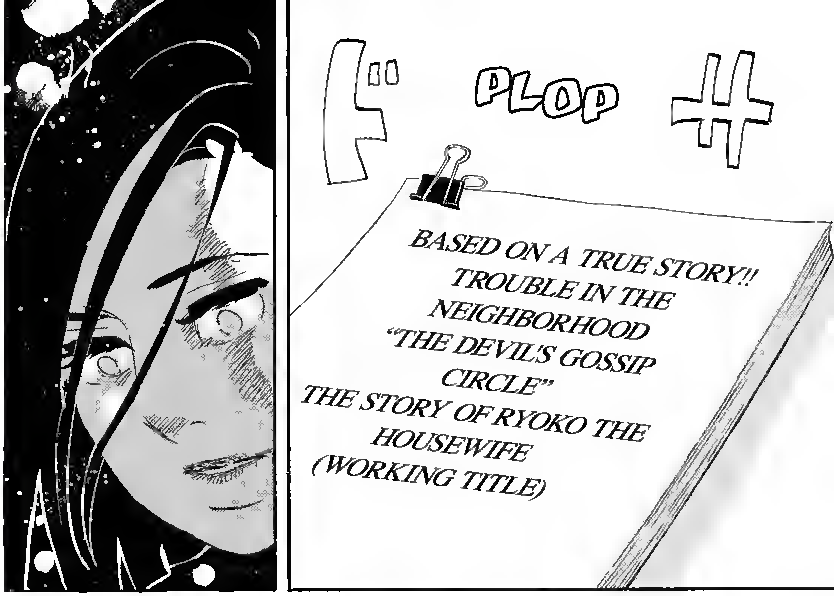

...SO IF WE CAN'T FIND ANYONE HERE, WE'D HAVE ZERO LUCK NO MATTER WHERE WE WENT...
COME TO THINK OF IT, TOKYO'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE THE HIGHEST POPULATION DENSITY IN THE WORLD...
YARGH!
IT'S YOU!
LEAN
TWITCH
HELLO.
OH!
THERE IS...
again...
HUH?!
SHOOT?!
COME TO RAIN ON OUR SHOOT AGAIN?
WHAT IS IT NOW?

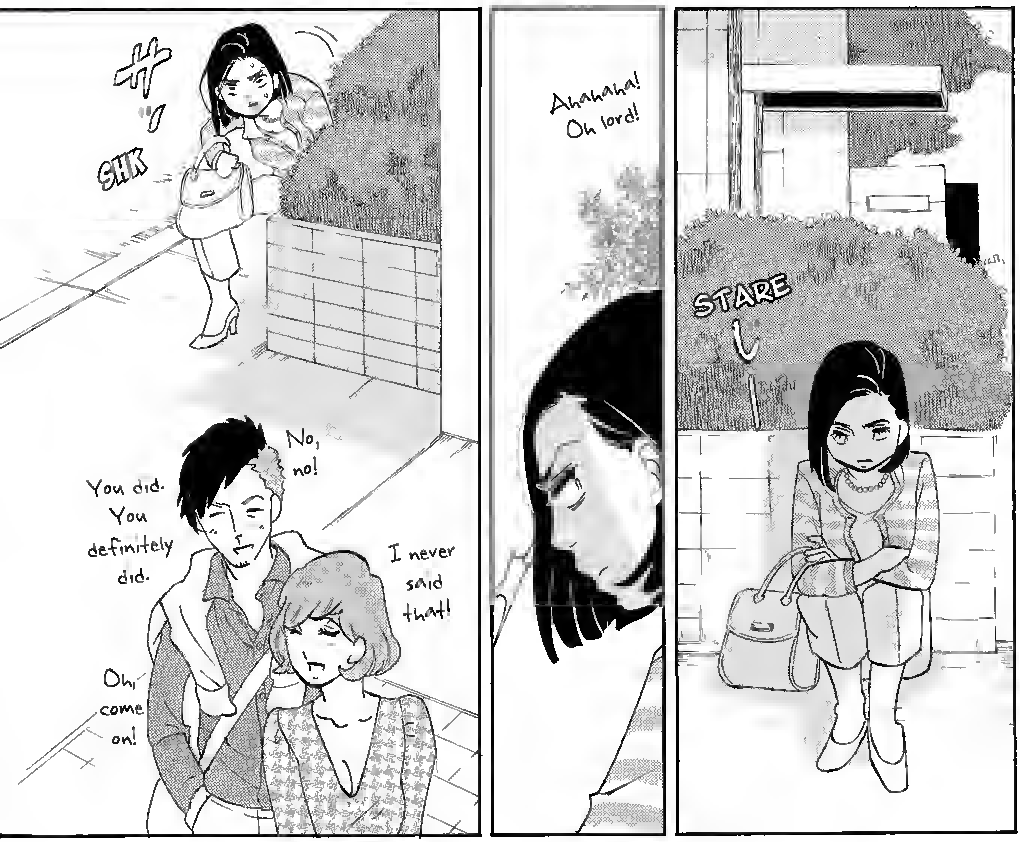
WAIT... WHY ARE YOU DRESSED LIKE THAT?
WE'RE FILMING A SUMMER SCENE TODAY.
THE VIDEO'S GOING TO SHOW-CASE ALL FOUR SEASONS.
COME ON, THAT'S WHAT ALL BUMKEY'S VIDEOS DO.
OH, BUT I GUESS YOU'RE TOO OLD TO KNOW THAT, MA'AM...
ACHOO !
SIGH ...
You must be cold in that getup.
HERE. BLOW YOUR NOSE!
RUSTLE
...
SNIFFLE
YOU SURE ARE MIDDLE-AGED.
YOU'RE QUICK ON THE DRAW WITH THOSE TISSUES...
DO YOU HAVE SOME CANDY IN THERE FOR ME TOO?
YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY CANOY FROM ME!!
KEY! WE'RE START-ING THE NEXT SCENE!
SEE YA.
TURN
YEAH, YEAH. BREAK A LEG.
BLOW
OH.
RIGHT.
I MET WITH THE NEW WRITER FOR THAT WEB SERIES THIS MORNING.
!!

SHE WAS REEEAAALLY YOUNG.
SHE'S DEFINITELY SLEEPING WITH THE PRODUCER.
SO?
BUT YOU'RE A BIG SELLER, SO THE PRODUCER WAS ALREADY TALKING ABOUT HOW HE WANTS TO HIRE YOU FOR A BIGGER, UPCOMING PROJECT...
I'M VERY SORRY ABOUT ALL THIS, RINKO.
I WAS IN A NEW SCREEN-WRITERS COMPE-TITION WITH HER ONCE!!
OH! I KNOW HER!!
SHE JUST GRADUATED COLLEGE, SO SHE'S PROBABLY ABOUT 22.
BA-DUMP
BA-DUMP
HOW OLD IS SHE?

SLUMP
Twenty-two
I EVEN HEARD SHE USED TO MODEL A LITTLE BACK IN THE DAY!
FROM MODELING
MOVED UP
Wow...
HUH...
IS THAT SO...
I KNOW HER LINE I.D.!
IF I ASKED SOME OF MY FRIENDS FROM BACK HOME, THEY'D TAKE CARE OF HER IN A SNAP.
You know, from Kisarazu
WANT ME TO LURE HER SOMEWHERE AND BEAT HER UP?
NOW, NOW, NOW!
SHE'LL FIND OUT YOU USED TO BE A GANGSTER!
YOU WERE?!
BLUSH
OH... BUT...
IF THAT GIRL AND THE PRODUCER REALLY ARE BANGING, I'LL MAKE THEM PAY...
IF HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THAT STUPID, BLONDE MODEL COMPLAINING ABOUT MY SCRIPT...
...TO SLIP HIS NEW PET INTO A JOB...
...I'LL KILL THE BASTARD!!
WHAM
SEE YOU LATER!

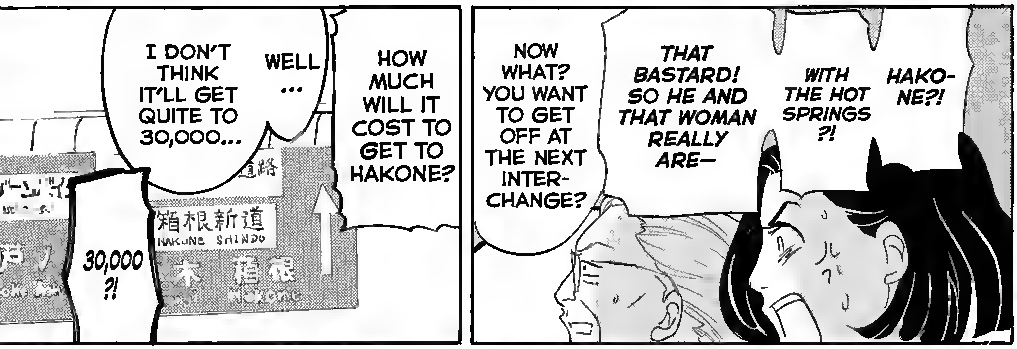

SPARKLE
ピチ
ピチ
SPARKLE
THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.
HUH?!
W-WHAT'S THE MATTER, RINKO?
OH. OF COURSE.
...AND HE JUST WOULDN'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER!
THAT NEW ACTOR, KEY, DIDN'T LIKE YOUR SCRIPT ...
WAIT, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK, RINKO DEAR!
Jeez! This is the problem with models!
I WAS RELIEVED TO HEAR YOU'VE ALREADY FOUND MY REPLACE-MENT.
SORRY ABOUT THE OTHER DAY.
PRO-DUCER ...
ピチ
SNAP
ピチ
SNAP
WE JUST GOT IN ANOTHER PROJECT I'D LIKE YOU TO HANDLE FOR US...
OH, HEY! THIS IS PERFECT !!
AH, HERE IT IS!!
HUH ?!
KISS
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MS. SAWADA, OUR NEW SCRIPT-WRITER. SHE'S A TOTAL ROOKIE AND, WELL, YOU KNOW, BUT..
OH, SURE! OF COURSE !
PRODUCER! LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF!
NICE TO MEET YOU-

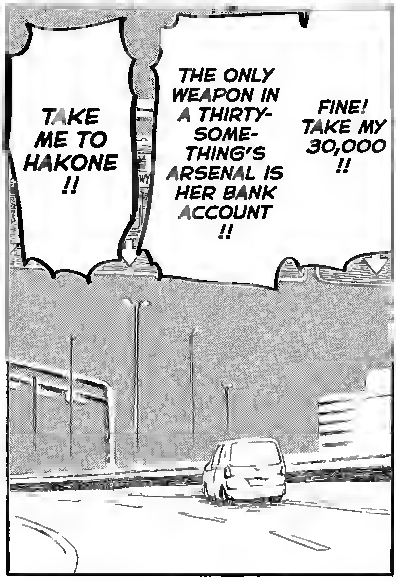

PLOP
BASED ON A TRUE STORY!!
TROUBLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
"THE DEVIL'S GOSSIP CIRCLE"
THE STORY OF RYOKO THE HOUSEWIFE
(WORKING TITLE)


SHH
No, no!
You did. You definitely did.
I never said that!
Oh, come on!
Ahahaha! Oh lord!
STARE

CREAK
TAXI!
EEK!
キャッ
WHOOSH
EEK!
キャッ
KER-CHUNK
SLAM
DRIVER! FOLLOW THAT CAR!!
HUH?!
WHAT CAR? YOU MEAN THE BLACK ONE?
VROOOM
VROOOOM
FOLLOW THEM! I SAID, FOLLOW THEM !!
SPARE ME THE CHITCHAT! HURRY! LOOK, TAKE THIS RIGHT!!
I USED TO GET PAPARAZZI IN HERE ALL THE–
BOY, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE DONE THIS.

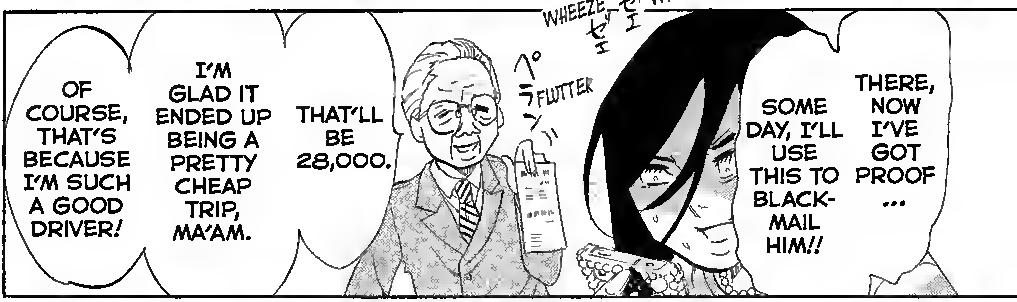
GOOD LORD! HOW FAR ARE THEY GOING?!
I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO HAKONE.
MA'AM ...
We've passed everything else—
VROOOOM
YEAH, GO FOR IT!!
YOU WANT ME TO KEEP FOLLOWING THEM, MA'AM?
HUH?!
THEY'RE TAKING THE FREEWAY?!
首都高速
SHUTO EXPWY
入口

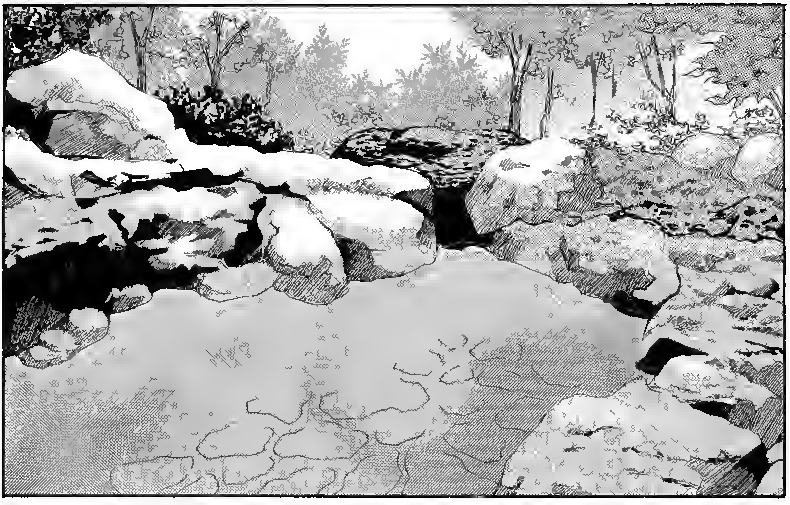

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO GET TO HAKONE?
WELL ...
I DON'T THINK IT'LL GET QUITE TO 30,000...
30,000 ?!
箱根新道
HAKONE SHINDO
NOW WHAT? YOU WANT TO GET OFF AT THE NEXT INTER-CHANGE?
THAT BASTARD! SO HE AND THAT WOMAN REALLY ARE—
WITH THE HOT SPRINGS ?!
HAKO-NE?!


TAKE ME TO HAKONE !!
THE ONLY WEAPON IN A THIRTY-SOME-THING'S ARSENAL IS HER BANK ACCOUNT !!
FINE! TAKE MY 30,000 !!

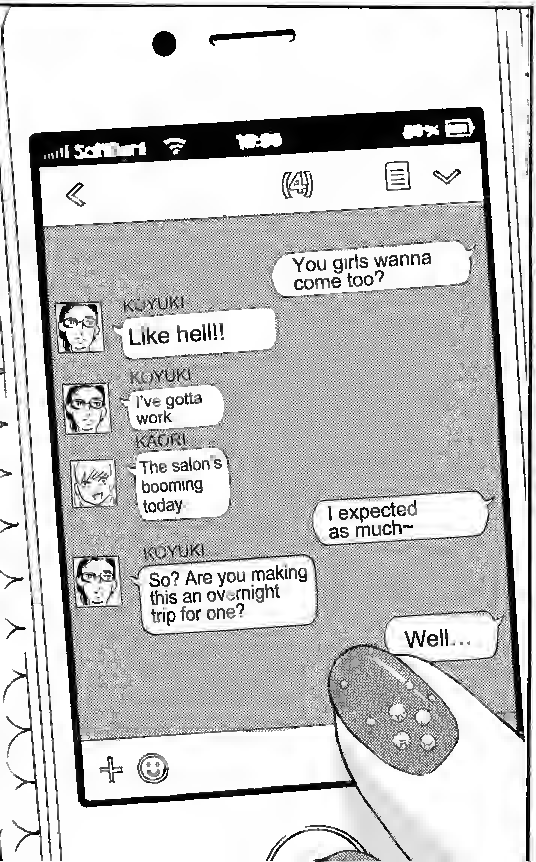
UGH... 30,000, EH?!
BUT IF I DON'T SEE IT FOR MYSELF AND TAKE SOME PHOTOS FOR PROOF, MY PRIDE AS A SCRIPT-WRITER WON'T BE SATIS-FIED.

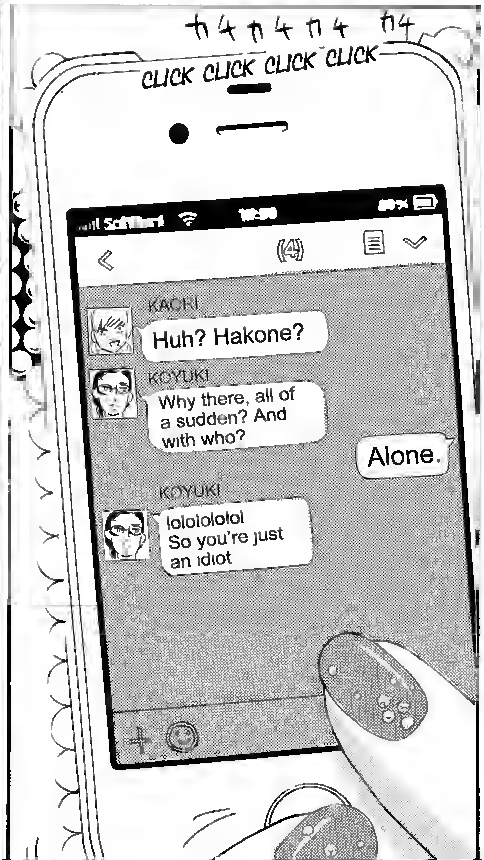
SNAP
パシャ
SNAP
パシャ
CUDDLE
イチャ
CUDDLE
イチャ


WHEEZE
ゼー
ゼエ
WHEEZE
FLUTTER
ペラ
ンバ
THERE, NOW I'VE GOT PROOF ...
SOME DAY, I'LL USE THIS TO BLACK-MAIL HIM!!
THAT'LL BE 28,000.
I'M GLAD IT ENDED UP BEING A PRETTY CHEAP TRIP, MA'AM.
OF COURSE, THAT'S BECAUSE I'M SUCH A GOOD DRIVER!



CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
CLICK


You girls wanna come too?
KOYUKI
Like hell!!
KOYUKI
I've gotta work
KAORI
The salon's booming today
I expected as much~
KOYUKI
So? Are you making this an overnight trip for one?
Well...


CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK
KAORI
Huh? Hakone?
KOYUKI
Why there, all of a sudden? And with who?
Alone.
KOYUKI
lolololololol
So you're just an idiot

SPLISH
(44)
I did spend ¥28000 on the taxi, so it'd be a waste to just come right home...
I'm gonna enjoy the hot springs.
KAORI
Are you for real? Lolololol
KOYUKI
You are such an idiot! Lolololol
I NEVER THOUGHT ...
SIGH...
...I'D BE RUINED BY A LITTLE UNDER-THE-SHEETS NEGOTIATING FROM A NO-TALENT ROOKIE TEN YEARS MY JUNIOR.

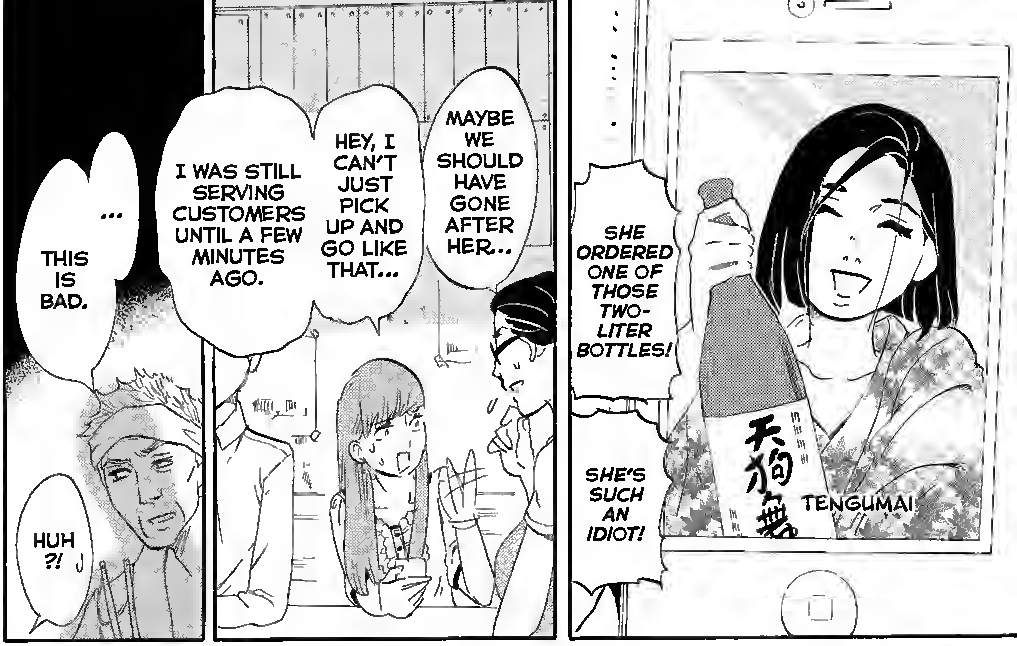
I KNOW THIS IS A DIRTY INDUSTRY ...
...BUT SCREEN-WRITING IS A CORE, CONTENT-GENERATING ROLE...
...SO I ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT AS LONG AS I DID GOOD WORK, EVERYTHING WOULD TURN OUT FINE.
OH, BUT...
MAYBE THAT GIRL IS BOTH YOUNG AND TALENTED.
SHE CAN WRITE IN A DIFFERENT STYLE THAN ME...
...WITH A POINT OF VIEW THAT ONLY A YOUNG GIRL HAS...
A SCRIPT THAT DOESN'T SUCK...
...THAT EVEN HE'LL ACCEPT.
SPLISH
チャプン

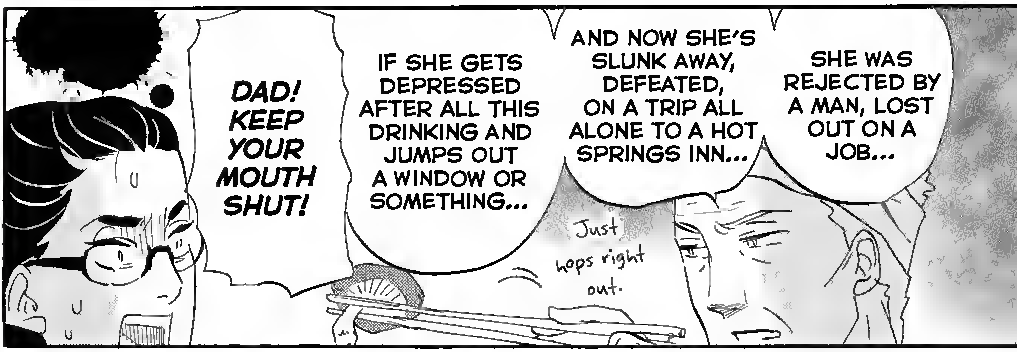
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN COMPETE, THEN.
...EVEN MAMI WILL START GETTING WORK, JUST BECAUSE THEY'RE AN ITEM...
...AND HE BECOMES A PRODUCER ...
AND IF SHE BECOMES MR. HAYASAKA'S GIRLFRIEND ...
I DON'T EVEN STAND A CHANCE.
IF A YOUNG, CUTE, TALENTED GIRL ALSO USES HER SKILLS IN THE BEDROOM...
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB
I'M SORRY, RINKO!
BUT THEY DECIDED I'M GONNA BE WRITING THIS ONE!
OH GOD, I CAN SEE THAT HAPPENING IN MY NEAR FUTURE.

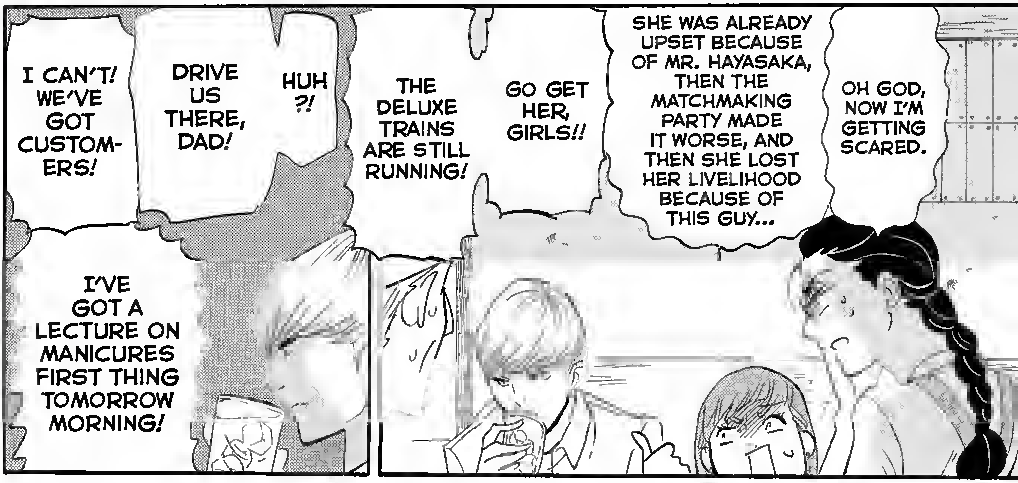
...YOU KNOW ...
IT WAS HIM COMPLAINING ABOUT MY SCRIPT THAT CREATED AN OPENING FOR THIS WOMAN TO SLIP IN...
GLUB GLUB GLUB
SPLASH!!
THAT'S RIGHT!
IT'S ALL THAT SHITTY BLONDE MODEL'S FAULT!
HE STARTED IT!!
YOU CAN'T MESS WITH ME LIKE THIS AND GET AWAY WITH IT, PUNK!!
THAT BASTARD ...
HE'LL NEVER SELL!! IN FACT,
I HOPE HE GOES BUST!!
I HOPE HE DISAP-PEARS !!
I HOPE HE ENDS UP OUT ON THE STREET !!
YAAARGH!!
BOOM

YEAH!
YEAH!
YEAH!
A 33-YEAR-OLD WOMAN'S ONLY WEAPON IS HER BANK ACCOUNT!!
THIS IS A REWARD FOR MYSELF!!
I ORDERED THE MOST EXPENSIVE, TOP-SHELF SAKE IN THE PLACE!!
It's over 10,000?
AS LONG AS I'VE GOT MY PHONE, DRINKING ALONE ISN'T SO LONELY!
CLICK CLICK CLICK
I'm drinking by myself in Hakone...
Top-shelf now!
LOL
CLICK
酒処

...DO YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO BE OKAY?
IS RINKO ...
...SERIOUSLY DRINKING ALONE AT AN INN?
AND YOU KNOW SHE GETS TOTALLY WASTED WHEN SHE DRINKS SAKE.
SHE GOES ON BENDERS ...
IT'S YOUR FAULT ...
...THIS STARTED WHEN YOU TOLD THEM TO CHANGE THE SCRIPT ...
HEY, I NEVER TOLD THEM TO CHANGE IT.
ALL I SAID IS THAT I DIDN'T WANT TO BE IN IT BECAUSE IT WAS BORING.
KHAP
YIKES!
CHECK IT OUT! THIS LOOKS BAD!

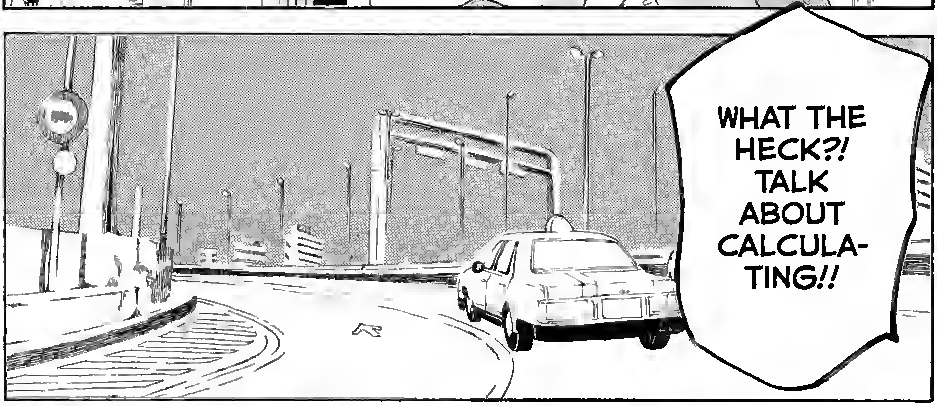

...
THIS IS BAD.
HUH ?!
I WAS STILL SERVING CUSTOMERS UNTIL A FEW MINUTES AGO.
HEY, I CAN'T JUST PICK UP AND GO LIKE THAT...
MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE GONE AFTER HER...
SHE ORDERED ONE OF THOSE TWO-LITER BOTTLES!
天狗舞
TENGUMAI
SHE'S SUCH AN IDIOT!


DAD! KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!
IF SHE GETS DEPRESSED AFTER ALL THIS DRINKING AND JUMPS OUT A WINDOW OR SOMETHING...
Just hops right out.
AND NOW SHE'S SLUNK AWAY, DEFEATED, ON A TRIP ALL ALONE TO A HOT SPRINGS INN...
SHE WAS REJECTED BY A MAN, LOST OUT ON A JOB...


I CAN'T! WE'VE GOT CUSTOMERS!
DRIVE US THERE, DAD!
HUH ?!
I'VE GOT A LECTURE ON MANICURES FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING!
THE DELUXE TRAINS ARE STILL RUNNING!
GO GET HER, GIRLS!!
SHE WAS ALREADY UPSET BECAUSE OF MR. HAYASAKA, THEN THE MATCHMAKING PARTY MADE IT WORSE, AND THEN SHE LOST HER LIVELIHOOD BECAUSE OF THIS GUY...
OH GOD, NOW I'M GETTING SCARED.

HEY! YOU CAN'T JUST RUN AWAY FROM THIS!
IT'S YOUR FAULT RINKO—
I'LL GO.
HUH?!
POPS.
THE CHECK.
THUNK
コト
I'M OFF TOMORROW, ANYWAY.
STOMP
スタ
スタ
STOMP
...
HUH?!
THUNK
ドン
I'LL GO AND CONFISCATE THAT TWO-LITER BOTTLE.

IF A SCREENWRITER KILLED HERSELF BECAUSE OF HIM, IT'D END HIS ENTERTAINMENT CAREER PRETTY QUICK.
MUST BE SELF-DEFENSE.
...
SERI-OUSLY?


WHAT THE HECK?! TALK ABOUT CALCULA-TING!!

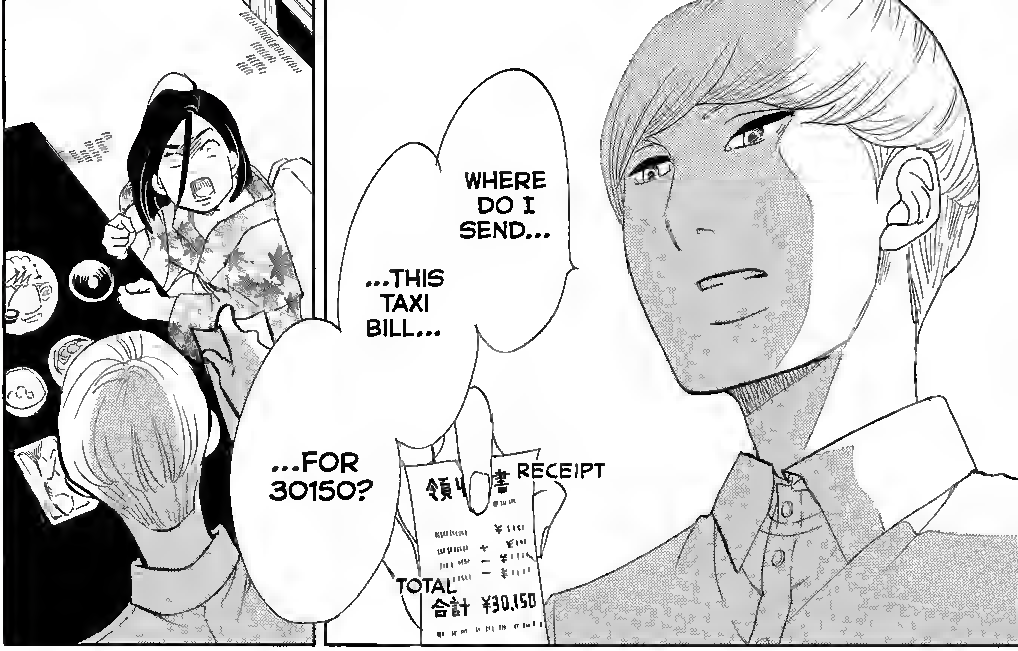
AHHH...
THIS TENGU-MAI...
SHAKE
SHAKE
...IS GOOD STUFF...

WEEE!
ドボ
BLUB
ドボ
BLUB

IF I CAN SEE YOU TWO, THAT MUST MEAN I'M PRETTY DRUNK, HUH? HA HA HA!
OHHH, THERE YOU ARE.
GOSH...
I'm not on the inn's menu, so I had to come in through the window. What if! What if!
THUNK
ガーン
HEY, STUPID.
RISE
YOU'RE DRINKING WAY TOO MUCH! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!!
OUT-SIDE.
YOU LOOK.
RINKO. WHAT IF.
HUH?
She's got a squid strip hanging out of her mouth.
YEAH! PARTY FOR ONE!
PARTYING BY YOUR-SELF ON A SOLO JOURNEY ...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'VE REALLY GOTTEN USED TO BEING ALONE, HAVEN'T YOU?
THE MOON IS SO BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
OH, IT'S A FULL MOON. HOW PRETTY.
ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE...
...DRINKING ALONE WHILE YOU GAZE AT THE MOON? WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
OH, NO, NO, NO! OF COURSE NOT. NOT A CHANCE.
AT SOME POINT, A GREAT GUY WHO LOVES ME WILL SHOW UP!

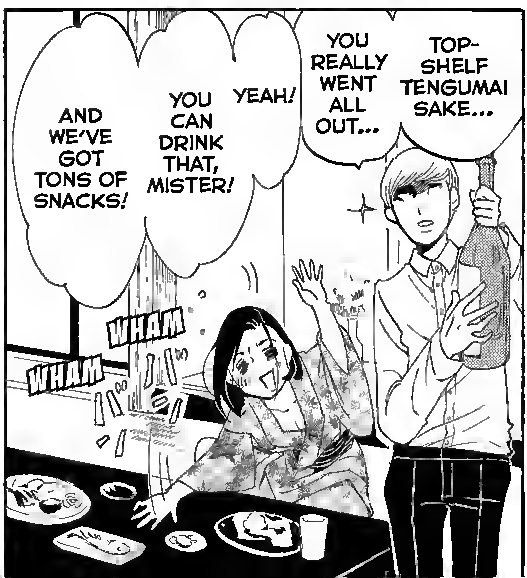
...THAT YOU'LL EVER FIND A GOOD MAN WHO LOVES YOU OR, EVEN IF YOU DO, YOU'LL GET MARRIED?
...THERE IS NO GUARANTEE ...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...I TOLD...
HUH ?!
ズ-!
WHOOSH
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... HE NEVER DOES.
THERE'S NO POINT IN DOING ANYTHING RIGHT. WHAT IF/ WHAT IF/
THAT'S RIGHT... IT'S A DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD OUT THERE. WHAT IF/ WHAT IF/
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THIS IS A WORLD WHERE A JOB YOU WORKED HARD FOR WAS SNATCHED AWAY UNFAIRLY ?
G-GUARAN-TEE?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THERE'S NO GUARAN-TEE?
LISTEN TO ME.
...AND FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND BEAUTY ?!!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...IT'S TRUE THAT THE ONLY IMPORTANT THINGS ARE MONEY AND CONNEC-TIONS...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...TALENT COUNTS SO LITTLE IT COULD BLOW AWAY IN THE WIND?
WAVE
WAVE
SCREEN-PLAY
WON-DER-FUL
SH-RRP
TALENT DOESN'T COUNT FOR SQUAT!! WHAT IF/ WHAT IF/
BUT... I'VE STILL GOT MY TALENT ...
RARGH!

I'LL QUIT THIS JOB...
STREAM
I'LL QUIT ...
WHAP
RATTLE
THEN ... ...
I JUST WANTED TO MAKE TOUCHING SHOWS AND MOVIES THAT PEOPLE COULD ENJOY.
THAT WAS NEVER MY GOAL.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THAT'LL BE TOUGH IF YOU'RE ONLY MAKING WEB SERIES AT AGE 33?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU CAN, BECAUSE AT YOUR AGE IT WOULDN'T GET YOU THE JOB ANYWAY?
SLEEP WITH SOMEONE I DON'T LOVE...
BECAUSE I COULD NEVER DO THAT.
ガ"
THINK
ラ
I'M TIRED OF IT ALL...
I HATE THIS...
I'LL QUIT AND GET A NORMAL JOB!!
I'LL QUIT WRITING SCRIPTS!!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'LL ONLY GET PART-TIME WORK AT YOUR AGE?


WHERE DO I SEND...
...THIS TAXI BILL...
...FOR 30150?
RECEIPT
TOTAL
合計 ¥30,150

じっ STARE

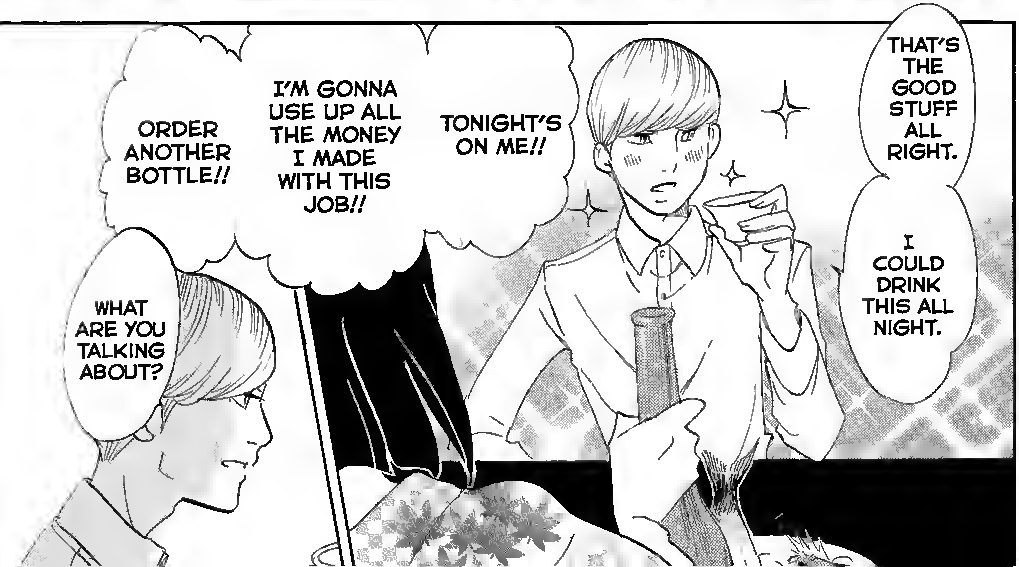
WH-
WHAT ARE YOU ...
I'LL BE TAKING THAT.
天狗舞

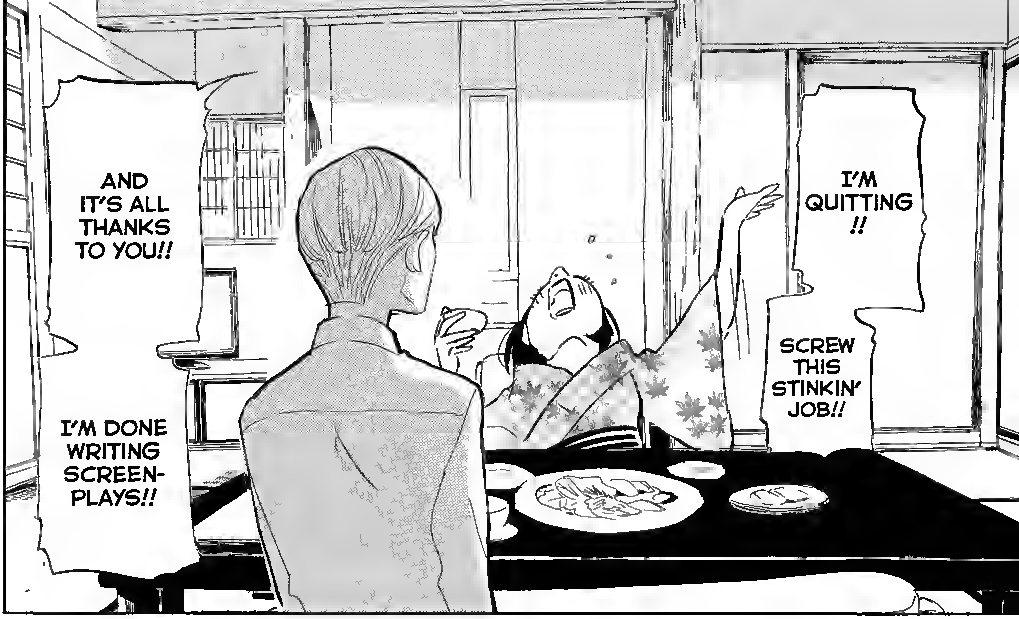

AND WE'VE GOT TONS OF SNACKS!
YOU CAN DRINK THAT, MISTER!
YEAH!
YOU REALLY WENT ALL OUT...
TOP-SHELF TENGUMAI SAKE...
WHAM
WHAM

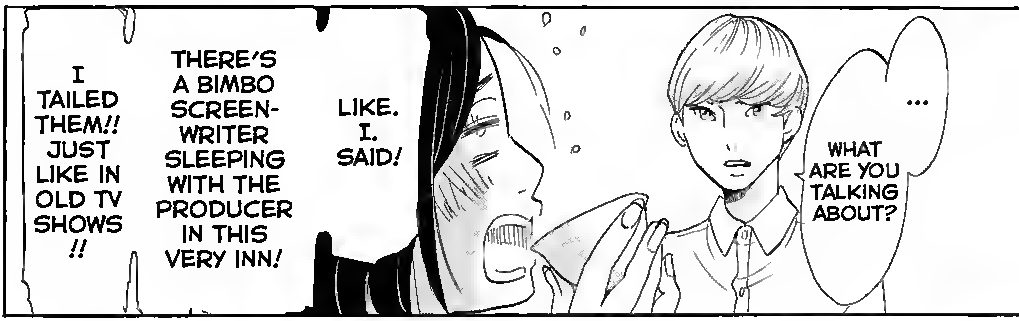
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB

...

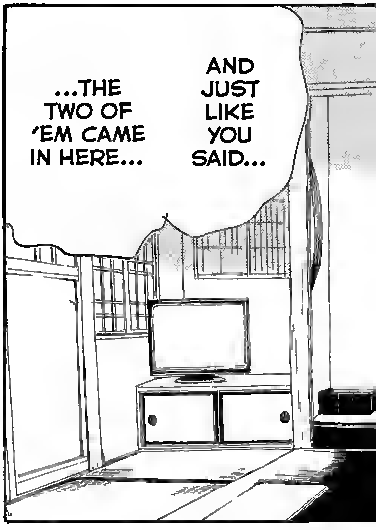
GULP
Yay! Cheers!
OH, GO FOR IT!!
YOU DRINK GOOD FOR A YOUNG GUY!!


THAT'S THE GOOD STUFF ALL RIGHT.
I COULD DRINK THIS ALL NIGHT.
TONIGHT'S ON ME!!
I'M GONNA USE UP ALL THE MONEY I MADE WITH THIS JOB!!
ORDER ANOTHER BOTTLE!!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?


I'M QUITTING !!
SCREW THIS STINKIN' JOB!!
AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU!!
I'M DONE WRITING SCREEN-PLAYS!!


...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
LIKE. I. SAID!
THERE'S A BIMBO SCREEN-WRITER SLEEPING WITH THE PRODUCER IN THIS VERY INN!
I TAILED THEM!! JUST LIKE IN OLD TV SHOWS !!

SO WHAT?
BWA-HA-HAHA!
ゲラゲラ
THEY'RE PROBABLY GOING AT IT RIGHT NOW.


...THE TWO OF 'EM CAME IN HERE...
AND JUST LIKE YOU SAID...

I...
BE-CAUSE... THAT'S DIRTY...
BE...
UGH!
WHY DOES THAT MEAN YOU SHOULD QUIT WRITING?
THAT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME, ALL OVER THE PLACE.
YOU'RE A 33-YEAR-OLD WOMAN.
WHY ARE YOU ACTING LIKE SOME INNOCENT SCHOOL-GIRL?
I HATE THAT SORT OF THING...
THAT'S LIKE A HANDSHAKE IN THIS INDUSTRY.
IT'S JUST SEX.
FREEZE

WHO DID YOU SLEEP WITH TO GET AHEAD?! SOME GEEZER?!
I BET YOU DO IT TOO !!
AH!
WHA ?!
WHAM
WHO KNOWS ?
MAYBE I DID.
I'VE GOT NO REASON TO TELL YOU.
BUT...
YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU'LL NEVER SURVIVE IN THIS INDUSTRY.
NOT WITH THOSE BORING SCRIPTS WRITTEN BY A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN WITH A SCHOOLGIRL'S SENSIBILITIES AND SHOJO MANGA ON THE BRAIN.
WAIT A SECOND ...
BORING?
THE ONLY SCRIPT OF MINE YOU'VE READ...
...IS THAT ONE, SINGLE SCRIPT FROM THE OTHER DAY!
THAT'S ALL I NEEDED TO READ.
YOU CAN'T TELL THAT FROM ONE SCRIPT!!
WOBBLE

THERE'S...
...A LOT, LOT MORE THINGS... I'D RATHER WRITE...
BUT A SCREENWRITER AT MY LEVEL HAS TO DO WHAT THE HIGHER-UPS SAY... ALL WE CAN DO IS WRITE TO FIT THE CAST, EVEN IF WE DON'T LIKE IT...
THAT'S... THAT'S WHY WHEN YOU CAME ALONG AND COMPLAINED ABOUT MY SCRIPT, I GOT BUMPED OFF...
SO THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO-
THEN...
ISN'T THIS YOUR CHANCE?
RIGHT NOW?
HUH?
IT'S ONLY A WEB SERIES, BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT ONE OF THE ACTORS RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF YOU.
THE VERY ACTOR THAT GOT YOU KICKED OFF THE PROJECT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
SO...

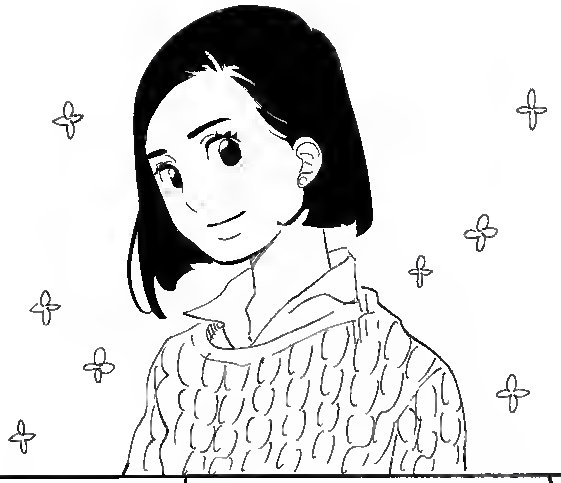
SLEEP WITH ME TO GET AHEAD.

YOU HAD ME HERE AND DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF THAT?
YOU REALLY ARE WASHED UP.
SHAKE
SHAKE
YOU NEVER KNOW.
...NEVER DO THAT WITH SOME-ONE LIKE ME...
I MEAN, A YOUNG GUY LIKE YOU WOULD..
I COULDN'T... DO THAT...
NO... ...
WANNA TRY YOUR LUCK?

HUH ?!
HEY!!
ガ THUNK
ガシャ CRASH
ガ CRASH
WAI—

CRASH
ガシャン
GIVE IT A SHOT.

TOKYO TARAREBA GIRLS (1) / END



TOKYO TARAREBA GIRLS

BONUS STORY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR PURCHASING "TOKYO TARAREBA GIRLS" VOLUME ONE.

I AM AKIKO HIGASHIMURA, THE AUTHOR. I'M 38.

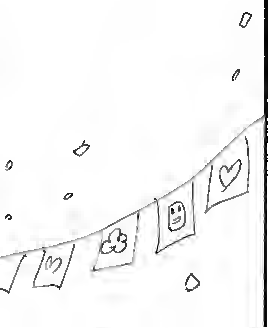
2014年現在

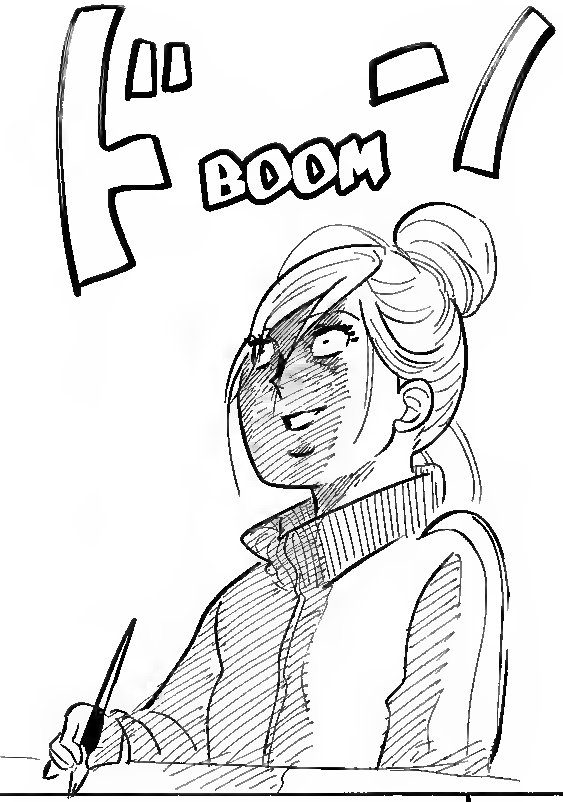
PRESENT YEAR: 2014

THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS COMIC STRUCK ME DURING THE WHOLE "HOSPITALITY FEVER" THAT, AS I'M SURE YOU ALL RECALL, WAS GOING ON BACK WHEN TOKYO WAS SELECTED AS THE HOST CITY FOR THE 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES.

WELL...

"INSPIRATION STRUCK ME" MAKES IT SOUND COOL, BUT... HONESTLY...





ALL I DID WAS DECIDE TO MAKE AN AWFUL COMIC ABOUT ALL MY THIRTY- AND FORTY-SOMETHING LADY FRIENDS WHO WERE IN SHOCK AT THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

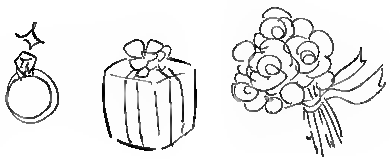
IN FACT, I'M ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO WISH THEY COULD'VE LIVED THE CELEBRATED LIFE OF A SINGLE ARISTOCRAT— NEVER GETTING MARRIED AND ENJOYING THEIR CAREER WITHOUT BEING TIED DOWN.

I DON'T BELIEVE EVEN FOR A SECOND ...

...THAT "WOMEN HAVE TO GET MARRIED,"

OR "A WOMAN'S HAPPINESS DEPENDS ON HER MAN,"

OR "ANY WOMAN WHO DOESN'T GET MARRIED IS PITIFUL."



IN THE END, A LOT HAPPENED, AND WE TIED THE KNOT. BUT I STILL USUALLY FIND MYSELF THINKING THAT MARRIAGE IS OVERALL A LOSS FOR THE WOMAN. (THEY'VE GOTTA CHANGE THEIR NAME AND SUCH.)

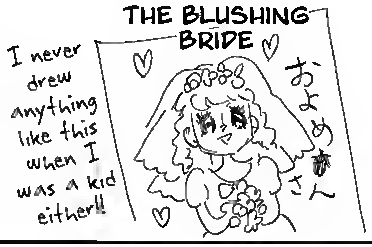
RECENTLY, I MARRIED AGAIN, BUT FOR A LONG TIME I THOUGHT "I'M TIRED OF MARRIAGE," AND RAN AWAY FROM IT, SAYING THINGS LIKE "NO MORE MARRIAGE, PLEASE! CAN'T WE JUST BE A NORMAL, HAPPY COUPLE WITHOUT GETTING MARRIED?"

PERSONALLY, MY FIRST MARRIAGE WAS A HUGE FAILURE. WE DIVORCED WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, AND AFTERWARDS I REALLY STRUGGLED AS A SINGLE MOTHER FOR FIVE YEARS.

HAPPINESS ISN'T SOMETHING YOU GET FROM A MARRIAGE. IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO FIND YOURSELF...YOU KNOW? SOMEHOW. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING, RIGHT? IT'S YOUR OWN PROBLEM... I MEAN, THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE OUT THERE WHO STAY UNHAPPY AFTER THEY'RE MARRIED!!

I'VE NEVER THOUGHT, EVEN FOR A SECOND, THAT I'D BE MUCH, MUCH HAPPIER WHEN I WAS MARRIED!!

SO!!



THEY SAY THIS!!

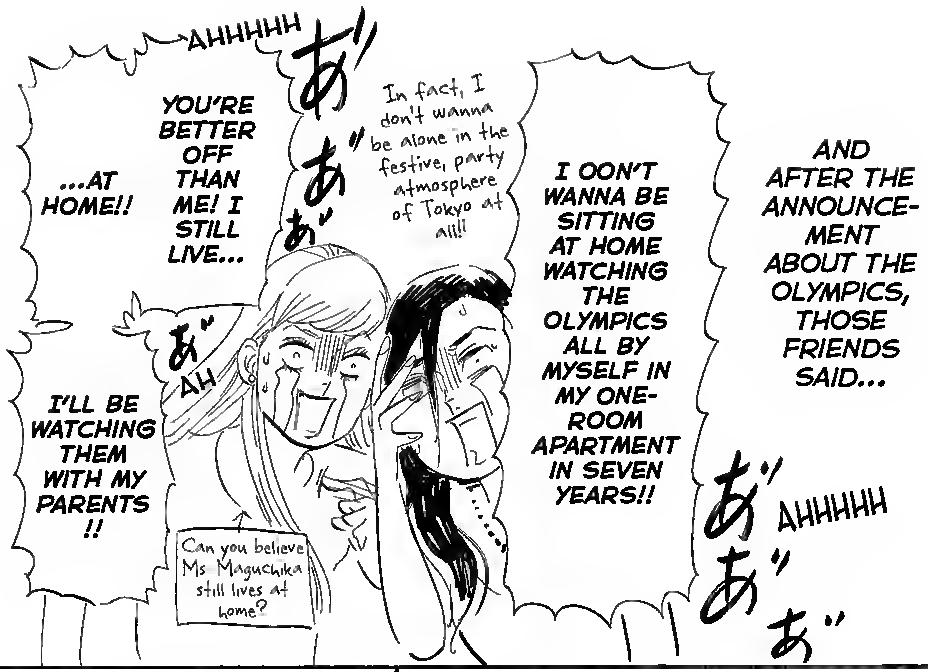
THE PEOPLE AROUND ME!!

THOSE PEOPLE!!

BUT!!

Please turn the page

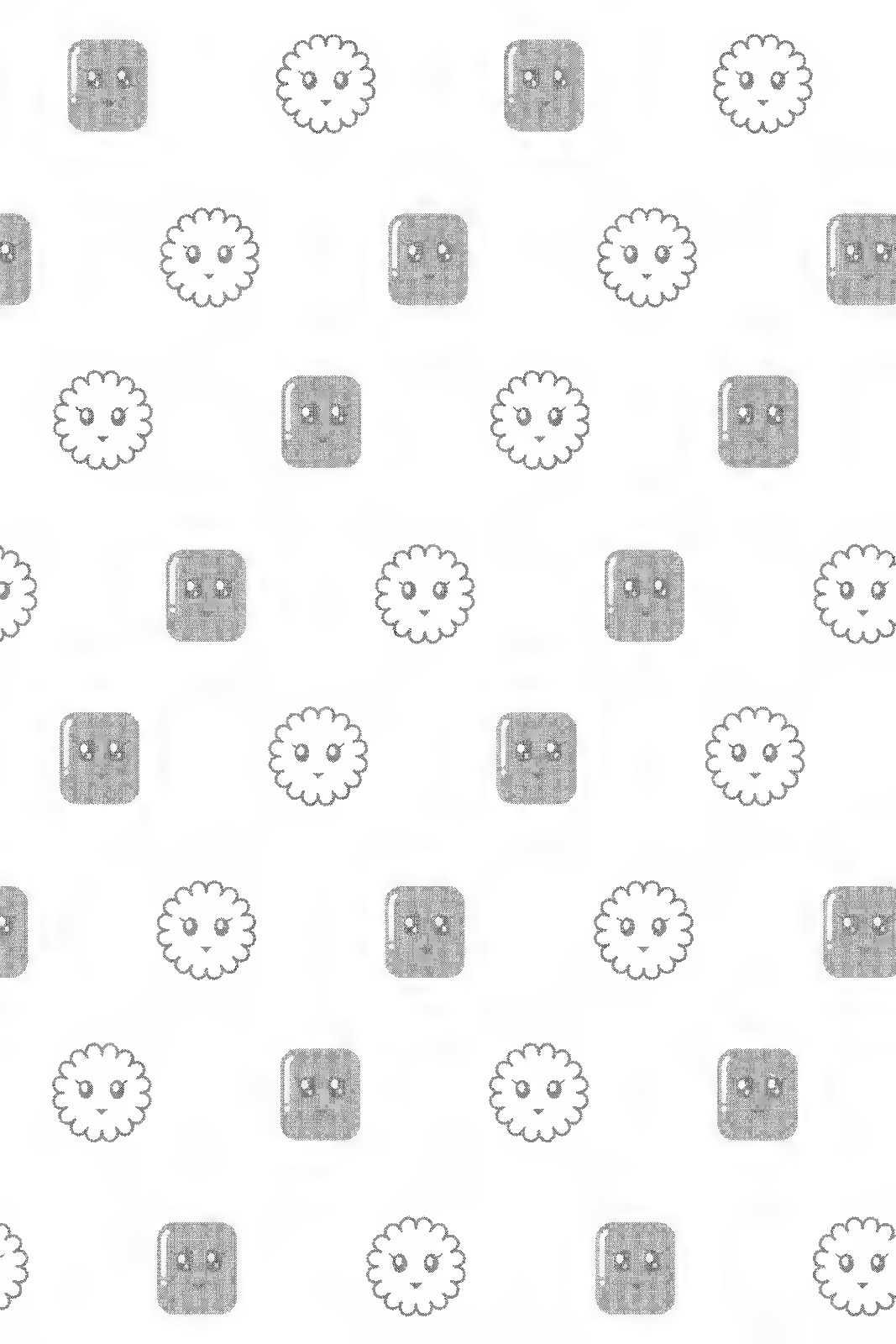
MY FRIENDS WHO SUDDENLY STARTED SPOUTING THIS STUFF (ESTIMATED TOTAL: 15)
STOMP STOMP
ME TOO.
ME TOO.
I WANNA GET MARRIED ...
I...I CAN'T GO ON ANY LONGER ...
AKKO ...
THERE'S NO GOOD MEN AROUND !!
BUT !!
THEN START BY FINDING A BOY-FRIEND.
YARGH!!
You're so pretty
I WANNA GET MARRIED!! I WANT KIDS!!
NO!!
Ms. Yamaguchi Kaori or Maguchika for short
I MEAN, YOU'VE GOT A GREAT CAREER GOING.
...YOU REALLY HAVE TO, YOU KNOW?
WAIT... I DON'T THINK ...
My model for the beautician
BEING ALONE ...
...TIRED OF IT...
I'M JUST ...
SLUMP
...TIRED OF LIVING ALONE.
I'M ...
AKKO ...
ANOTHER FRIEND SAYS...
HEHEH


AHHHHH
あ〃あ〃あ
YOU'RE BETTER OFF THAN ME! I STILL LIVE...
...AT HOME!!
In fact, I don't wanna be alone in the festive, party atmosphere of Tokyo at all!!
I OON'T WANNA BE SITTING AT HOME WATCHING THE OLYMPICS ALL BY MYSELF IN MY ONE-ROOM APARTMENT IN SEVEN YEARS!!
AND AFTER THE ANNOUNCE-MENT ABOUT THE OLYMPICS, THOSE FRIENDS SAID...
I'LL BE WATCHING THEM WITH MY PARENTS !!
あ〃 AH
Can you believe Ms Maguchika still lives at home?
あ〃AHHHHH
あ〃あ〃

STOP YOUR DAY-DREAMING AND FIND A MAN!! I DON'T CARE WHO HE IS!!
THEN YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO FIND A HUSBAND WITHIN SEVEN YEARS, RIGHT?!
AND LET ME TELL YOU THIS!! YOU'RE NOT YOUNG ANYMORE, SO IT'S NOT GONNA BE AS EASY AS IT WAS WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR TWENTIES!!
WHAM!

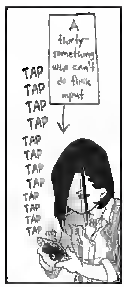
...WAS MY SELF-IMPORTANT PROCLAMATION. WE'RE ALWAYS HAVING DRINKING NIGHTS LIKE THIS, AND I FINALLY GOT TIRED OF TRYING TO APPEAL TO THEIR GOOD SENSE (THEY'RE ALL YOUNGER THAN ME), SO I DECIDED TO JUST TURN IT INTO A COMIC... THAT'S ABOUT HOW IT HAPPENED.

END



Translation Notes

Tokyo Tarareba Girls: "Tarareba" means "What-if," like the "What-if" stories you tell yourself about what could be or could have been. The name is also taken from the names of the two food characters in the series, Tara (codfish milt) and Reba (liver) who always say "tara" and "reba" respectively at the end of their sentences in Japanese, referencing the "what-if" meaning of "tarareba."



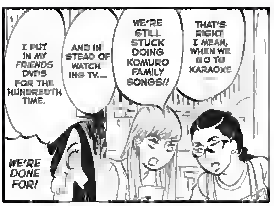
Flick Input, page 17
[17.2]
A method of typing on Japanese smart phones in which, instead of repeatedly tapping a key to get to the desired alternate character, the user taps the key and then flicks their finger in a certain direction to get the desired character.

Hoppy & Naka, page 18
[18.2]
Hoppy: A cheap drink that contains less than 1% alcohol and tastes like beer.
Naka: Shochu, a more alcoholic drink (usually around 25% to 35% alcohol) mixed with the hoppy.

WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WE LOOK AHEAD SIX YEARS TO WHAT THESE THREE WILL BE DOING DURING THE NEXT OLYMPICS?
THE CODFISH MILT AND LIVER ARE TALKING!
AHA-HA!
THEY'LL BE DRINKING HERE LIKE ALWAYS! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

Tara and Milt, starting on page 23
[23.2]
In Japanese, the talking foods, codfish ("tara") milt and liver ("reba"), create a pun on the series title.

Yamada, page 53
[53.3]
A reference to the TV show "Shoten," a comedy program in which the host asks questions to a panel of traditional rakugo storytellers. When the host thinks their answer is funny, the panelist receives a cushion to sit on, brought out by Takao Yamada, a popstar from the '70s.

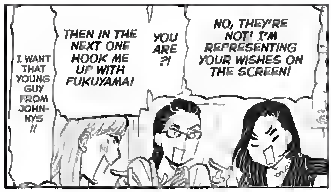

I PUT IN MY FRIENDS' DVDS FOR THE HUNDREDTH TIME.
AND INSTEAD OF WATCHING TV...
WE'RE STILL STUCK DOING KOMURO FAMILY SONGS!!
THAT'S RIGHT. I MEAN, WHEN WE GO TO KARAOKE
WE'RE DONE FOR!

Komuro Family, page 96
[96.4]
A group of bands and musicians centered around their music producer and sometimes songwriter Tetsuya Komuro, who was very active in the mid-'90s.

Fukuyama, page 98

[98.3]

Likely Masaharu Fukuyama, a singer-songwriter, writer, actor, producer, and much more. He hit it big with a successful single in 1992 and has been active since. / Johnnys refers to a talent agency "Johnny & Associates" and the male entertainers that are trained/promoted there.


I WANT THAT YOUNG GUY FROM JOHNNYS !!
THEN IN THE NEXT ONE HOOK ME UP WITH FUKUYAMA!
YOU ARE ?!
NO, THEY'RE NOT! I'M REPRESENTING YOUR WISHES ON THE SCREEN!

Hospitality Fever, page 167

[167.3]

This "fever" began after Christel Takigawa, a new presenter, gave a speech about Japan's special brand of "hospitality" as part of the selection process for the 2020 Olympics host city which helped Tokyo win the honor.

Tokyo Tarareba Girls 1

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